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TIME TO PAUSE THE RESET? DEFENDING U.S. INTERESTS IN THE FACE OF RUSSIAN AGGRESSION

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

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TIME TO PAUSE THE RESET? DEFENDING U.S. INTERESTS IN THE FACE OF RUSSIAN AGGRESSION

THURSDAY, JULY 7, 2011

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:05 a.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. The committee will come to order. At the start of the hearing I would like to recognize Annette Lantos, the widow of former Congressman Tom Lantos who participated, along with her family members, in the inauguration of the Tom Lantos Institute in their native Hungary, and it will be undoubtedly the premier human rights institute in the world. So we always welcome you back, Annette. Thank you for being with us. And I am sorry I could not be on that trip to participate in such a momentous occasion.

Also at the start of the hearing, I would like to capitalize on the presence of a range of State Department personnel and remind the Department of this committee's longstanding pending request for the Secretary of State to testify on Afghanistan and Pakistan at the end of this month, we hope, and immediately upon full Senate confirmation, Deputy Secretary of State Bill Burns, whom we would like to have testify on Iran and Syria. And we had requested Ambassador Burns when he was still Under Secretary of State and had just been nominated for the Deputy Secretary post.

After recognizing myself and the ranking member, my friend, Mr. Berman, for 7 minutes each for our opening statements, I will recognize each member of the committee for 1 minute for their opening remarks.

We will then hear from our witnesses, and I would ask that you summarize your prepared statements in 5 minutes each before we move to the questions and answers with members under the 5-minute rule. Without objection, the witnesses' prepared statements will be made a part of the record and members may have 5 days to insert statements and questions for the record, subject to length limitation in the rules.

The Chair now recognizes herself for 7 minutes. The Obama administration came into office intending to "reset" the U.S.-Russia relationship. Their assumption was that the Bush administration had needlessly antagonized Moscow with overly aggressive policies,

and that a more conciliatory approach would produce Russian cooperation in a broad range of issues. To that end, the Obama administration has offered one concession after another, but the concrete results have been meager at best.

Russian cooperation on Iran is usually cited as a major accomplishment. But other than agreeing not to block U.N. Security Council Resolution 1929, which Moscow insisted be watered down, Russia's approach to Iran remains essentially unchanged even as Iran accelerates its march toward a nuclear weapons capability.

Russia is also committed to stopping U.S. missile defense efforts. The Obama administration has said that the recently ratified Strategic Arms Control Treaty, known as the New START, places no restrictions on U.S. missile defense efforts. However, the Russian Government has repeatedly stated that the treaty does, in fact, come with such restrictions and has unambiguously stated that it will not honor the terms of the agreement if the U.S. proceeds with its plans.

Russian claims that U.S. missile defense efforts in Europe are a threat to their security, and we know that those claims are absurd on their face. Independent experts say that not only does the proposed system pose no threat but that it cannot do so, a fact that Russia's leadership is well aware of. Russia's true motive is a political one; namely, to divide NATO and to demonstrate to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe that, despite their close alliance with the U.S., Moscow intends to retain a dominant influence over their affairs. This is how the government and the people in that region see it.

Putin's government claims a privileged position for Russia regarding the countries on or near its borders and has repeatedly used its muscle to enforce this assertion of rights. Moscow has exploited their dependence on Russian energy supplies—including oil, natural gas, and electricity—to pressure governments to accommodate Russian demands, going so far as to cut off supply in the middle of winter.

When Estonia defied the demands of Russian officials not to relocate a Soviet memorial in its capital, a massive cyberattack was launched on that country, almost paralyzing it. Worst of all, in 2008 Russia's longstanding efforts to reimpose its control over Georgia moved beyond sowing political and economic turmoil and promoting separatist movements to an all-out invasion of large parts of that American ally. The tepid U.S. response has set a dangerous precedent and convinced Moscow that it has little to worry about.

Moscow's actions have demonstrated the lengths that it is prepared to take to assert its influence on an even larger scale, a fact that is especially troubling in light of Europe's growing dependence on Russian energy. There are many other areas in which Russia still targets U.S. interests, such as its arms sales to the Chavez regime in Venezuela, but the list is too long to go into here.

So it appears that the benefits for the U.S. of the reset are few and far between. But we have paid a high price for them. Last year's nuclear cooperation agreement with Russia was a gift, pure and simple. The U.S. market was opened to Russian nuclear companies, but U.S. companies will find no corresponding opportunities

in that country, where they will be shut out by its state-owned nuclear monopolies. Russia did receive the U.S. seal of approval for its efforts to become the world's one-stop shop for all things nuclear. This reward was given even as Russia was continuing to assist Iran in its nuclear program.

The latest offer to Moscow is support for Russia's entry into the World Trade Organization. This, despite Russia's continuing refusal to clamp down on the massive piracy of American intellectual property, which is second in scale only to China's, and much of which occurs on state-owned property.

It also comes as the Russian Government's abuses of human rights and brutal approach toward those seeking a truly democratic government in Russia has only worsened. After the Russian authorities broke up opposition protests in Moscow and St. Petersburg late last year, detaining scores of activists, Russia's Vladimir Putin stated, "If [the protesters] demonstrate without permission, they'll take a cudgel to the head. That's all there is to it."

This disturbing statement underscores the brutal nature of the Russian Government and its abusive treatment of anyone who challenges its policies. There has been a particularly shameful pattern of beatings and murders of journalists in Russia, and no one has been held accountable. And yet in another effort to prevent the democratic opposition from participating in the upcoming parliamentary elections, the Kremlin has banned Boris Nemtsov, one of Russia's most prominent democratic leaders—whom I met with last year—from leaving Russia again, should he return from his current visit to France.

What have we bought for all of our concessions to Moscow? How many times do we have to relearn the painful lesson that aggressors cannot be bought off, that allies must not be abandoned, and that naively trusting our adversaries to do anything other than pursue their own interests will produce no other outcome than to needlessly sacrifice our interests and undermine our security?

It is my hope that the administration will reconsider its approach to the Russian regime.

And I now turn to my good friend and distinguished ranking member for his opening remarks.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Ros-Lehtinen follows:]

CHAIRMAN ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Opening Statement
Hearing: "Time to Pause the Reset?:
Defending U.S. Interests in the Face of Russian Aggression"
July 7, 2011

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When Estonia defied the demands of Russian officials not to relocate a Soviet memorial in its capital, a massive cyberattack was launched on that country, almost paralyzing it.

Worst of all, in 2008 Russia's long-standing efforts to reimpose its control over Georgia moved beyond sowing political and economic turmoil and promoting separatist movements to an all-out invasion of large parts of that American ally. The tepid U.S. response has set a dangerous precedent and convinced Moscow that it has little to worry about.

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It is my hope that the Administration will reconsider its approach to the Russian regime.

I now turn to the distinguished Ranking Member, Mr. Berman, for his opening remarks.

Contact: Committee Press Office, 202-225-5021
www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

Mr. BERMAN. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and I appreciate you calling this hearing. Before I start my opening comment I would simply like to join you in welcoming Annette Lantos. And it is quite fitting that we are holding a hearing on U.S.-Russia relationships with one of our witnesses being Katrina Lantos Swett and Annette Lantos in the audience, because there really was no more knowledgeable and articulate Member of Congress on the issue of U.S.-Soviet and then U.S.-Russia relationships than our late chairman, Mr. Lantos. And it is very good to have you here.

When the Obama administration took office in January 2009, the U.S.-Russia relationship was at one of its lowest points since the fall of communism at the end of the Cold War. President Obama wisely decided that permitting this relationship to falter did not serve U.S. interests, and the administration set a new policy, branded as the reset, to increase engagement on a number of levels.

While there remain significant areas of disagreement between the U.S. and Russia, no doubt, including Russia's record on human rights, democracy, and rule of law, its conflict with Georgia, and Moscow's arms sales to dictatorial regimes, there can be no doubt that the reset has led to increased cooperation between our two countries in a number of critical areas. Most importantly, Russia, whose training and technology during the 1990s played a significant role in the advancement of Iran's nuclear weapons program, Russia has played a far more constructive role in efforts to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability. Yes, they watered down the U.N. resolution, but the resolution that they voted for was the strongest by far resolution on this subject that the U.N. Security Council had ever adopted.

The Russians at the same time canceled a contract to sell Tehran the sophisticated S–300 air defense system, an air defense system that would have rendered talk of a military option much weaker in terms of its import and effect on Iranian behavior.

In April 2010, President Obama and Medvedev signed the landmark New START agreement. And Russia already cut their nuclear arsenal below the 1,550 ceiling it is obligated to reach by 2018. Some dismiss this significant achievement, saying Moscow would have reduced their nuclear missiles to this level for economic reasons anyway. These critics neglect to mention that without New START there would be no legal inspection, no verification monitoring regime, as the previous one expired with START 1. There would also be no limits on the numbers and types of new nuclear missiles Moscow could deploy.

President Reagan famously said, "Trust but verify." It seems that some critics would have preferred to trust their assumptions about Russian nuclear security outlays and to trust Russia not to build more and more newer missiles than give President Obama credit for safeguarding U.S. nuclear security.

Russia has also supported the Northern Distribution Network. This is very important. Since early 2009 it has served as a critical transit route through Russia and Central Asia to support U.S. military operations in Afghanistan. Almost two-thirds of the nonlethal materials we need to support our troops are now shipped on this

route, and it is especially critical today, given the increasing difficulty of moving goods through Pakistan.

Russia and the United States also have a mutual interest in preventing the flow of narcotics from Afghanistan, and cooperation on counternarcotics efforts have also increased as a result of reset.

And finally, as Russia continues to negotiate its entry into the World Trade Organization, it has reopened its markets to imports of U.S.-produced meat, a market that largely was closed when President Obama took office. Those exports could total as much as $500 million this year. This means more jobs for Americans.

I do associate myself with the chairman's remarks regarding Russian enforcement of intellectual property issue. This is a critical trade issue. Russia's laws, to have meaning, must be enforced.

Now, there is part of this glass that is half empty. Despite repeated calls by President Obama and Secretary Clinton, Russia still refuses to comply with the cease-fire agreement that ended the August 2008 conflict with Georgia. As a result, there are more Russian troops stationed in the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia than before the conflict. This is a clear violation of the agreement hammered out by President Nicholas Sarkozy.

The administration should continue to hold Russia to its commitments at the ongoing talks with Georgia in Geneva. While Russia remains one of the least free countries in Europe, and we are right to raise serious concerns about Russia's dismal record on democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

The recent decision by the Russian Ministry of Justice to deny registration to the People's Freedom Party is emblematic of the obstacles faced by opponents of the government. Yet the space for public discourse in Russia has widened to some extent in the last 2 years. Russia's young tech-savvy President has steadfastly fought efforts to restrict the Internet, and an increasing number of Russians are taking on their government with new-found activism.

A significant number of Russian citizens has stepped forward to protest the destruction of a forest to build a highway between Moscow and Saint Petersburg. Regrettably, those who engage in such protests sometimes pay a very steep price. After exposing corruption by tax authorities, lawyer Sergei Magnitsky was murdered. Even if the investigation of his death ordered by President Medvedev is allowed to run its course and the perpetrators brought to justice, it will not bring back a husband to his wife, a father to his children, or a son to his parents.

Madam Chairman, focusing only on areas of disagreement with Russia creates a distorted picture of the complex U.S.-Russia relationship, but it is critical that these troubling issues not get swept under the rug. I look forward to hearing the views of our panel on areas of both cooperation and disagreement with Russia, and yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Berman. And I would like to thank the chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia, Mr. Burton, for yielding his spot for the opening statements. So I would like to recognize Mr. Smith, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa Global Health and Human Rights for his 1-minute statement.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thank you, Dan.

Ms. Swett, glad to see you again and welcome to the panel. The reality is that Russia has a dismal human rights record, thanks to a decade of Vladimir Putin's self-styled managed democracy that has more to do with control than freedom. While some fixated with the pursuit of arms control and other agreements with Moscow, as important as they are, the human rights situation on the ground in Russia has deteriorated across the board. In category after category, we have witnessed the conditions going from bad to worse. Whether you are speaking about freedom of expression in the media, the right of all believers to freely profess and practice their faith, or the ability of human rights defenders, NGOs, and independent journalists and political parties to operate without fear of government harassment, the space for such activity has suddenly shrunk.

The absence of an independent judiciary and meaningful checks and balances on the Executive power has contributed to this reality. Illustrative, though, of this case is the tragic case of Sergei Magnitsky, mentioned by Mr. Berman, I should say. And instead of featuring prominently in the administration's bilateral agenda, human rights clearly take a back seat to other considerations. At times one is left with the strong impression that preserving reset itself has become a priority for Washington.

I ask unanimous consent that my full statement be made a part of the record.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Without objection.

Mr. Meeks, the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia is recognized.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Madam Chair. Indeed the relationship between the United States and Russia a comprehensive and a complex one and you can look at it whether the glass is half full or half empty. But the reset agenda has produced, as Mr. Berman said, a New START treaty, diplomatic cooperation on issues ranging from North Korea to Iran, a transit agreement to facilitate the logistical supplies for international forces in Afghanistan, and cooperation in Arctic resources.

As a result of the U.S. engagement with Russia, Russia canceled the sale of advanced S–300 surface-to-air missiles to Iran, and agreed to U.N.-based sanctions in carrying economic loss in the process.

What begs the question is, what is actually the alternative to reset? Pausing the reset entails curbing U.S. engagement and hereby our strong support for economic reforms and limitization and modernization that is already underway in Russia. This rule would strengthen Russia's regressive elements with vested interest in maintaining the status quo for personal gain as opposed to expanding prosperity and economic opportunity across a wider section of Western population.

It is important to note that even Russia's political opposition has expressed support for the Obama administration's reset policy, notably at a recent meeting in Moscow with members of this committee. They also support Russia's WTO accession precisely because this enhances the rule of law paradigm in Russia and they

support a repeal of the Jackson-Vanik amendment because it undermines U.S. moral credibility in Russia.

And I think that with this complicated issue, we need to look at what the alternative would be. The alternative would be to regress or continue to progress. I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you Mr. Meeks.

Now Mr. Burton, the Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia chairman, is recognized. Thank you, Dan, for yielding your spot.

Mr. BURTON. Yes, Madam Chairman. We lead a delegation to Moscow last week and met with the members of the Foreign Affairs or Federal Council over there. We met with the chairman, the Duma, and the Ministry of Economic Development. We also met with the American Chamber of Commerce.

And I don't want to be redundant. I think my colleagues, you, Madam Chairman, and the ranking member have covered the issues very well. But what I would like to say is the reset issue ought to include very strongly the issue of Georgia and the building in Belarus of the nuclear power plant that is very close to Vilnius, which may endanger those people down the road if there is a nuclear mishap.

The last thing I would like to say is that there is a lot of corruption in the government. The American Chamber talked about that. But they also said they think there is an opportunity for changing the attitude of the Russian Government in areas of commerce if we pursue this path.

So I share all of your concerns, but I think there is a possibility that through the private sector we may be able to make some gains over there.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you Mr. Burton.

Mr. Faleomavaega, the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific is recognized.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Chair, thank you for giving me this opportunity. I would like to also associate myself and personally welcoming our distinguished lady and Mrs. Annette Lantos for joining us this morning and also for having members of her family join us.

Madam Chair, I don't have an opening statement but I look forward to hearing from our witnesses. I do have some questions. Thank you for initiating this hearing this morning. Thank you.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir. Mr. Rohrabacher, the Subcommittee on Oversight Investigations chair, who always has an opening statement.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. I find it very significant that there are American decision makers whose frame of reference on issues dealing with Russia has not changed—excuse me, please——

Mr. BURTON. Pardon me, Dan, I am sorry. Give him an additional 15 seconds, please

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Rohrabacher will reset the clock.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Reset, I like that. There you go.

I find it significant that many of the decision makers, our decision makers, have a frame of reference in dealing with Russia that has not changed since the end of the Cold War. And there was no one, as Mr. Sestanovich can testify, who is more belligerent to the

Soviet Union than I was, especially during my time when I worked with him in the Reagan White House. And there are reasons for concern which you expressed, Madam Chairman, but I find many of the people want to focus on some of the concerns and maybe perhaps expand, have an expansionary view of those concerns, have not appreciated the dramatic change that has taken place in Russia in the last 20 years. Many of those criticizing Russia have this same Cold War mentality and haven't even been to Russia in the last 20 years.

They have had tremendous successes in reforms. We should be encouraging them and working with them to that end, not nitpicking with what I might suggest are sinister descriptions of certain activities.

And let me just note, Georgia attacked two provinces. It was a Georgian violation of a longstanding truce. It wasn't a Soviet or Russian attack on Georgia that precipitated that problem. And if we keep acting this way, nobody in Russia will ever take us seriously unless we start to be more precise about using those words.

Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. Connolly of Virginia is recognized.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman, and welcome to our panel.

The relationship between the United States and Russia is a terribly important one. It is not perfect. It is a work in progress. I believe that Secretary Clinton and President Obama in setting the reset button took a wise and pragmatic course. We need to continue to put democratic pressure on institution building in Russia. We need to insist on transparency and accountability, but at the same time we must also recognize that its strategic location is unavoidable. We must engage with Russia and they must engage with us.

One of the criticisms contained in some of the testimony today has to do with, of course, arms limitations treaties. That is a long tradition of American foreign policy on a bipartisan basis, and to call it a cornerstone of President Obama's dangerously naive policy of unilateral disarmament is, in my opinion, entirely over the top, unwarranted, and nothing but pure ideology, I look forward to hearing the testimony today.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

My Florida colleague, Mr. Rivera, is recognized.

Mr. RIVERA. Thank you, Madam Chair, and I look forward to hearing the testimony as well, particularly given the fact that there have been so many concerns raised about Russia's involvement in the region raised by colleagues earlier, particularly Chairman Rohrabacher, but also Russia's perhaps involvement around the world that runs counter to U.S. interests.

And I will be interested to hear about commentary regarding Russia's involvement in this hemisphere as well. I will get into that during the question and answer session. But I also believe that it is important that we raise the issue of naiveté with respect to Russia's previous performance on nuclear proliferation issues and what exactly should be the U.S. posture, given their track record which has been counter to U.S. interests. So I look forward to hearing that comment.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Chabot, our last opening remarker, the Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia chairman.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Madam Chair. I will forgo making an opening statement. I will note two things. I have a markup going on in Judiciary, so please note that is the reason for my absence in part of this meeting today, and I apologize for that.

Secondly, I noted when I walked in, the presence of Tom Lantos' widow here today, and she of course attended many, many meetings over the years. And I have the distinct honor and pleasure of working both with Tom Lantos and under him when he was chair of the committee as well, and he is deeply, deeply missed. And he was one who truly stood for collegiality and bipartisanship, and we fought on various issues but we actually—this happens on this committee, we actually agree on some issues too, which is good.

This chair is following in his footsteps in many ways. As Henry Hyde and Ben Gilman and some of the other real stars on Capitol Hill. So thank you; we miss him very deeply and we are glad to see you here today.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much.

And now we are so pleased to present our wonderful witnesses today.

Katrina Lantos Swett established the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice in 2008, where she serves as President and CEO. She also teaches human rights and American foreign policy at Tufts University. Dr. Swett is, of course, the daughter of our former colleague, Tom Lantos, who was a leading member of our committee for many years and a former chairman. And we also had many of us, old-timers had the pleasure of serving with your husband Richard when he so well represented New Hampshire here in Congress. So thank you for being here with us, Dr. Swett.

Ariel Cohen is the senior research fellow in Russian and Eurasian Studies and International Energy Policy at the Heritage Foundation. He is a frequent witness on Capitol Hill, including the House and Senate Foreign and Defense Committees, as well as the Helsinki Commission. Dr. Cohen has worked extensively with a range of national security agencies, including the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and many others. So thank you for being with us today, Dr. Cohen.

And then we will hear from Dr. Steven Sestanovich, who is the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Professor of International Diplomacy at Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs, as well as Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. Dr. Sestanovich was Ambassador-at-Large and senior advisor to the Secretary of State for the former Soviet Union from 1997 to 2001. He was also a member of the State Department's policy planning staff and senior director for policy development at the National Security Council during the Reagan administration. And as we know, this year is the 100th anniversary of Ronald Reagan's birth, and we hope that his legacy is recognized and celebrated every day for freedom and liberty. Thank you for all the enslaved people of the world.

So thank you, excellent witnesses here today, and we will begin with Dr. Swett. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF KATRINA LANTOS SWETT, PH.D., PRESIDENT, LANTOS FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. SWETT. I want to thank you, Madam Chairman, for the opportunity to come today to present my views on the state of human rights and the rule of law in Russia. As you know, my late father, Tom Lantos, was a former chairman of this committee, and I am honored to have the opportunity to appear before his colleagues whom he both admired and deeply respected. My father was in some ways an old-fashioned man and he believed in the traditional notion that our partisan, if not our policy differences, should stop at the water's edge. For this reason he was one of the most profoundly bipartisan Members of the Congress when it came to matters of national security and foreign policy. And it is in that same spirit that I hope to present my remarks today.

In December of last year I traveled to Moscow to witness the culmination of the second show trial of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Russia's most prominent political prisoner. I went in order to speak out against the mockery of justice that it represented, and in doing so I was quite literally following in my father's footsteps.

In May 2005 Congressman Lantos stood on the steps of the courthouse in Moscow to denounce the outrageous manipulation and abuse of the Russian judicial system represented by the targeted prosecution of Mr. Khodorkovsky. Sadly, things have only degenerated in the intervening 5 years. Whatever small shreds of legal plausibility the first Khodorkovsky trial may have had, there can be no doubt that the second trial had only one true purpose, and that was to keep a charismatic and compelling political adversary of Mr. Putin carefully locked away behind bars for as long as necessary.

And what is it that makes Mr. Khodorkovsky such a threat to Mr. Putin? Above all, it is his vision of a Russia, open, transparent, and genuinely Democratic. Khodorkovsky stated with humility and conviction in his closing words to the court at the end of his trial when he said, "I am not an ideal person, but I am a person of ideas."

And over the nearly 8 years of his incarceration Mr. Khodorkovsky has shown that he is prepared to make great sacrifices for those ideas, ideas of a Russia with an independent judiciary, where an individual's rights don't depend on the whim of the czar; ideas of a Russia where democracy and freedom of the press are a reality and not a facade; ideas of a Russia where the government is not the source of corruption and lawlessness but, rather, they are the nation's defender against such scourges.

Mikhail Khodorkovsky is far from alone in believing in the importance of these ideas for the future of his country. While I was in Russia, I had the opportunity to meet with a variety of human rights activists, and they uniformly expressed the conviction that things were moving in a very bad direction in their country, from the unexplained violent deaths of over 150 journalists, to ongoing violation of article 31 of the Russian Constitution, which protects the right of the people to peacefully assemble. They are deeply con-

cerned about the future of democracy and pluralism, and they want our help in standing up for these rights.

It was a bitter cold December day when I went to the Moscow courthouse, and I was taken aback to see many dozens of protesters standing across the street, quietly but eloquently expressing their support for Mr. Khodorkovsky, for Platon Lebedev, Sergei Magnitsky and other victims of an increasingly corrupt and undemocratic system in Russia. Their message to me was simple: Don't sacrifice the values on which we want to see the new Russia built. It is a message I believe we need to heed.

Thank you very much and I look forward to answering your questions.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Dr. Swett.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Swett follows:]

Testimony of Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett, President, Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice

July 7, 2011, House Committee on Foreign Affairs Hearing: "Time to Pause the Reset? Defending U.S. Interests in the Face of Russian Aggression"

Distinguished Members of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs:

I want to thank you for the opportunity to come today to present my views on the state of human rights and the rule of law in Russia. As you know, my late father Tom Lantos was a former Chairman of this Committee and I am honored to have the opportunity to appear before his colleagues whom he both admired and deeply respected. My father was, in some ways, an old fashioned man, and he believed in the traditional notion that our partisan, if not our policy differences should stop at the water's edge. For this reason he was one of the most profoundly bi-partisan members of the Congress when it came to matters of national security and foreign policy and it is in that same spirit that I hope to present my remarks today.

In December of last year I travelled to Moscow to witness the culmination of the second "show trial" of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Russia's most prominent political prisoner. I went in order to speak out against the mockery of justice that it represented and in doing so, I was quite literally following in my father's footsteps. In May of 2005, Congressman Lantos stood on the steps of the courthouse in Moscow to denounce the outrageous manipulation and abuse of the Russian judicial system represented by the targeted prosecution of Mr. Khodorkovsky. Sadly, things have only degenerated in the intervening 5 years. Whatever small shreds of legal plausibility the first Khodorkovsky trial may have had, there can be no doubt that the second trial had only one true purpose and that was to keep a charismatic and compelling political adversary of Mr. Putin carefully locked away behind bars for as long as necessary. And what is it that makes Mr. Khodorkovsky such a threat to Mr. Putin? Above all it is his vision of a Russia open, transparent and genuinely democratic. Khodorkovsky stated it with humility and conviction in his closing words to the court at the end of his trial. He said " I am not an ideal person but I am a person of ideas" and over the nearly 8 years of his incarceration, Mr. Khodorkovsky has shown that he is prepared to make great sacrifices for those ideas: Ideas of Russia with an independent judiciary where an individual's rights don't depend on the whim of the "Tsar"; Ideas of a Russia where democracy and freedom of the press are a reality and not a façade; Ideas of a Russia where the government is not the source of corruption and lawlessness but rather the nation's defender against such scourges. Mikhail Khodorkovsky is far from alone in believing in the importance of these ideas for the future of his country. While I was in Russia, I had the opportunity to meet with a variety of human rights activists and they uniformly expressed the conviction that things were moving in a very bad direction in their country. From the unexplained violent deaths of over 150 journalists, to the ongoing violation of Article 31 of the Russian constitution which protects the right of the people to peacefully assemble, they are deeply concerned about the future of democracy and pluralism and they want our help in standing up for these rights.

It was a bitter cold December day when I went to the Moscow courthouse and I was taken aback to see many dozens of protestors standing across the street quietly yet eloquently expressing their support for Mr. Khodorkovsky, Platon Lebedev, Sergei Magnitsky and other victims of an increasingly corrupt and undemocratic system in Russia. Their message to me was simple: Don't sacrifice the values on which we want to see the new Russia built. It is a message I believe we need to heed.

Thank you very much and I look forward to answering your questions.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Dr. Cohen. And I apologize that our name plates do not recognize your academic credentials, as someone who worked mightily to finish my doctorate and earn my doctorate—I think those name plates were done by an embittered all-but-the-dissertation individual. Dr. Cohen is recognized.

STATEMENT OF MR. ARIEL COHEN, SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW, RUSSIAN EURASIAN STUDIES AND INTERNATIONAL ENERGY POLICY, THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Mr. COHEN. Madam Chairman, it is a pleasure to be here. I am a senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation and my views are my own and should not be construed as presenting the official position of the Heritage Foundation.

I would like to thank you and Chairman Burton, before whom I testified recently on energy, and particularly my old friend Doug Seay for facilitating these hearings.

For the last 2 years the Obama administration had touted Russia's reset policy as one the great diplomatic achievements. In March 2009, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton presented her Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov with a red button symbolizing a new reset policy. Symbolic and prophetic as a result of the incompetent translation, the inscription on the button read "overload" instead of "reset."

Ever since, President Obama has spent an inordinate amount of time cultivating Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in making him his principal diplomatic interlocutor, despite the fact that Medvedev is Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's appointed protege with no political base of his own. The grave error of judgment made in assessing who was really in charge led to a chain of strategic miscalculations in relations with Moscow.

While grooming Medvedev, the administration agreed to cut our strategic nuclear forces under the New START treaty; abandoned its original program of missile defense deployment in Poland and the Czech Republic; engaged Russia in futile missile defense talks; pursued a policy of geopolitical neglect in the former Soviet Union; and toned down the criticism of violations of the political freedom of which Dr. Lantos spoke so eloquently.

However, the reality remains that Medvedev has only limited capability to deliver and looks increasingly like he is unlikely to continue in office. Putin still is Russia's "national leader" and the real power behind and on the throne.

Even with Medvedev as President, Russia still is willing to use force to achieve his geoeconomic goals as well. Control of energy corridors from the Caspian Sea to the Black Sea and beyond was the objective of the Russian military operation against Georgia in August 2008. This year Gazprom opened the Nord Stream pipeline from Russia to Germany with spurs to other European countries, increasing their dependence on Russian energy. This has been clearly confirmed by incidents of the last 2 decades involving delays in energy supplies to Azerbaijan and a number of other countries from the Black Sea to the Baltics.

The concerns that U.S. policymakers should have vis-à-vis Russia to date are not limited to arms control, to Russia's vehement resistance to our missile defense plans in Europe, to energy policy and

security in Europe. The concerns also should include the deterioration in this situation with human rights and rule of law.

Just recently, in July, Russians banned Boris Nemtsov, the prominent opposition leader, from traveling abroad for 6 months. In June the Russian Minister of Justice denied registration to Party of People's Freedom. In May, prosecutors opened the criminal investigation of a prominent anti-corruption whistleblower, Aleksey Navalny, for what he said was revenge for exposing alleged fraud in Russian state companies. And in December 2010, former oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon Lebedev were sentenced in the second trial for additional lengthy terms in Siberian prisons on charges of embezzlement and money laundering the majority of legal experts agree are spurious.

On May 31, the European Court of Justice ruled the Russian State had seriously violated Khodorkovsky's rights during his arrest and trial detention, and despite President Medvedev's clear statement about Khodorkovsky not being a threat to the public, the courts continued to reject his appeals for early release.

Can I have 1 more minute?

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Yes, sir.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you so much.

To conclude, the Obama administration and Congress need to recognize the reset with Russia, which would require huge payoffs with small results, is in a dire need of reassessment. The U.S. should pursue its national interests in relations with Moscow instead of chasing a mirage.

The U.S. and Russia have multiple mutual interests in opposing Islamic radicalism and terrorism. We have joint concerns about non-proliferation, counternarcotics, boosting trade, investment expansion, tourism, business, and exchanges. Twenty years after the end of the Cold War and collapse of Communist Russia, Russia's anti-American policies should be over.

The administration needs to stop its policy of pleasing Moscow, and instead add pressure on Russia to start its own reset for the benefit of its own people. In particular, Congress should ensure that missile defenses are developed for the benefit of American troops and allies, and prevent the administration from granting far-reaching concessions to Russia in negotiating short-range nuclear arms deals.

Congress has an important role to play in changing relations with Russia in the energy field for the better, for the benefit of American business and the Russian people.

Congress should send a strong signal that it cares about America's friends in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and expand U.S. ties with those who reach out for freedom. And you have a great role to play to pass the bipartisan Senate 1039, the expanded Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act, that will deny visas to corrupt Russian businessmen and officials examining their banking practices and acquisitions and target Russian police and prosecutors——

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. COHEN [continuing]. Who fabricate evidence, torture, and murder opponents. Thank you very much.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Dr. Cohen.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cohen follows:]

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CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY

Testimony before the

House Foreign Affairs Committee

July 7, 2011

Rethinking Reset: Re-Examining the Obama Administration Russia Policy

Ariel Cohen, Ph.D.

Senior Research Fellow for Russian and Eurasian Studies and International Energy Policy,

The Heritage Foundation

Testimony by Ariel Cohen, Ph.D., Senior Research Fellow for Russian and Eurasian Studies and International Energy Policy, The Heritage Foundation

July 7, 2011, Washington, D.C.

My name is Ariel Cohen. I am Senior Research Fellow for Russian and Eurasian Studies and International Energy Policy at The Heritage Foundation. The views I express in this testimony are my own, and should not be construed as representing any official position of The Heritage Foundation.

For the past two years, the Obama Administration has touted its Russia "reset policy" as one of its great diplomatic achievements. In March 2009, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton presented her Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, with a red button symbolizing a new "reset" policy with the Russian Federation. Symbolically, as the result of incompetent translation, the inscription on the button read "overload" instead of "reset." Ever since, President Obama has spent an inordinate amount of time cultivating Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and making him his principal diplomatic interlocutor—despite the fact that Medvedev is Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's appointed protégé, with no political base of his own.

The grave error made in assessing who was in charge led to a chain of strategic miscalculations in relations with Moscow. While grooming Medvedev, the Administration agreed to cut U.S. strategic nuclear forces under the New START, abandoned the original program of missile defense deployment in Poland and the Czech Republic, engaged Russia in futile missile defense talks, pursued a policy of geopolitical neglect in the former Soviet Union, and toned down criticism of the violation of political freedom in Russia. However, the reality remains that Medvedev has only limited capacity to deliver and looks increasingly unlikely to continue in office. Putin still is Russia's "national leader" and the real power behind—and on—the throne.

Even with Medvedev as President, Russia is still willing to use force to achieve its geo-economic goals as well. Control of energy corridors from the Caspian Sea to the Black Sea and beyond was an objective of the Russian military operation against Georgia in August 2008. This year, Gazprom opens the Nord Stream pipeline from Russia to Germany, with spurs to other European countries, increasing their dependence on Russian energy. This has been clearly confirmed by incidents over the last two decades involving delays in energy supplies to Azerbaijan, as well as the Baltic States, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Serbia, Slovakia, and Ukraine and other countries. From the American perspective, Russia's energy nationalism and continued collusion

with anti-American regimes in Iran, Syria and Venezuela are troubling long-term geopolitical trends and should be sources of frustration in Washington.

In the last two and a half years of "reset", despite the rhetoric about needed improvements in the rule of law, Russian whistleblowers died in jail or were severely beaten; Russian courts continued to sentence political opponents to lengthy prison terms for crimes they had not committed; peaceful demonstrators were beaten and incarcerated; and the state refused registration to democratic political parties. And things are likely to get worse.

Based on the "reset" record, top White House and State Department officials now privately recognize that they bet on the wrong horse, as it is unlikely that Medvedev will wield any real power beyond the spring of 2012 even if he nominally remains in office. However, the Administration cannot publicly admit its mistake, as this would undermine the very notion of this over-personalized "reset" policy.

Obama's "Reset": Neglecting American Values and Interests

The "reset" announced by the Obama Administration in February 2009 was part of the White House's broader "new realism" in U.S. foreign policy, a bizarre hybrid that combined a reluctance to defend human rights in Russia, China, and Iran with apologies for alleged "crimes" caused by American exceptionalism. The Administration revised down the scope of American priorities in Russia and Eurasia; de-facto allowing Russia to build what President Medvedev called "a zone of privileged interests" in the former Soviet Union, effectively denying these countries a democratic path of development and close relations with the Euro-Atlantic zone.

This pseudo-realism has adulterated fundamental American interests and abhors the use of force to protect them. One could argue that that brand of "realism" had already shown its shortcomings in the 1980s, when it ignored the revolutions that ended the Cold War. The Obama Administration failed to understand that there is no escape from both protecting US interests and pursuing moral imperatives in politics, even in world politics.

Underlying the Obama Administration's "reset" of relations with Russia was its supposed promotion of democracy and human rights even as it sought engagement on the two countries' common interests. The state of democracy inside Russia is, in fact, being addressed by Washington and Moscow: Michael McFaul, the President's Senior Director for Russia on the National Security Council, who President Obama nominated to be the next U.S. Ambassador in Russia, is the leader of a bilateral working group on civil society for the U.S. side, in partnership with Vladislav Surkov, Putin's and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's political architect.

Beyond domestic political engagement, the Obama Administration's "reset" policy has primarily been a series of concessions to a regime in Moscow that is seeking Soviet-like superpower prestige and status through forced nuclear equality with Washington. This approach has far-reaching negative implications for U.S. security and foreign policy as well as for the security of U.S. allies.

Popular Front on the Offensive: Putin Returns?

Whoever occupies the Oval office is facing a complex system of U.S.–Russian relations. These include nuclear nonproliferation and arms control, the supply of US and NATO troops in Afghanistan via Russian territory, human rights and Islamist extremism in Russia, the energy and sovereignty concerns of U.S. friends and allies, and the Iranian quest for weapons of mass destruction, to name just a few. The Obama Administration cannot address these issues by pretending that Medvedev and his narrow circle of supporters wield the real power. In fact, it is the Putin group—which includes the key energy, military and security services officials, businessmen, and the leadership of the United Russia ruling party—that exercises the ultimate power.

Now Putin, no great friend of America, is likely to move back from the Prime Minister's office to the Kremlin in the spring of 2012, raising tough questions about Obama's Russian policy.

Putin has publicly disagreed with Medvedev, his handpicked successor, on a number of key policy issues, many of them vital to U.S. interests. While Medvedev has generally articulated positions which are considered liberal in Russia, Putin has consistently criticized the US and stuck to the statist line. Some of the issues on which the two have apparent differences include the role of freedom in the country, the legacy of Joseph Stalin (Putin called him "an effective manager"), and the collapse of the Soviet Union (Putin called it "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the twentieth century, while his protégé thinks the Bolshevik October putsch was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe for Russia).

The two have also argued on modernization (Medvedev wants a broad-based rejuvenation of the state, including the political system, while his mentor emphasizes boosting Russia's military capabilities through science and technology – just as the czars and the Soviets did); Libya (Medvedev wants to work with the Allies, while Putin blames the US for destabilization of the Middle East); and persecution of former oil magnate Mikhail Khodorkovsky (Medvedev said that the man does not represent any danger to the public, while Putin intervened in the ongoing trial and demanded that he continue to sit in jail).

Putin also supports "friendship" with China and Venezuela and good relations with Iran. At various points Putin accused the U.S. of supporting Islamist terrorists in the North Caucasus in order to dismantle Russia, illegally intervening in Iraq, being responsible for the global economic recession, and toppling regimes in the Middle East through promotion of social media. Putin pays lip service to the fight against corruption, and directly intervenes in prominent court cases.

Putin formed his worldview in the KGB and by reading Russian nationalist philosophers, including some with fascist sympathies. Pro-Putin elites include the top officers of the security services and the armed forces, the military-industrial complex, state company bosses, and a part of the business class. They are a mix of statists, imperialists, and nationalists. They support a future for Russia that is rooted in its imperial past and Christian Orthodoxy.

Last month, worried about his own and his party's declining popularity and anxious to outmaneuver Medvedev, Putin launched the Popular Front, a political contraption that would consist of United Russia, women's and environmental organizations, sympathetic businessmen, and trade unions. Putin may allow communists and possibly Vladimir Zhirinovsky's ultra-nationalists in the next Parliament, but no real democratic opposition. This could spell the end of the feeble multi-party system in Russia.

Free from concern about a serious U.S. response, the Kremlin has continued to prosecute Putin's political enemies:

- In June, the Russian Justice Ministry denied registration to the Party of People's Freedom (PARNAS), a new party created by prominent opposition leaders, such as the former Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov; former Deputy Prime Minister Boris Nemtsov; former Duma Deputy Chairman Vladimir Ryzhkov, and former Deputy Energy Minister Vladimir Milov -- an early indication that December's parliamentary elections will be neither free nor fair.
- In May, prosecutors opened a criminal investigation of anti-corruption whistleblower Aleksey Navalny for what he said was revenge for exposing alleged fraud at Russian state companies.
- In December 2010, former oligarchs Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon Lebedev were sentenced, in their second trial, to additional lengthy terms in Siberian prisons on charges of embezzlement and money laundering. On May 31, the European Court of Justice ruled that the Russian state had seriously violated Khodorkovsky's rights during his arrest and trial detention. Despite Medvedev's talk about Khodorkovsky not being a threat to the public, the courts continue to reject his appeals for an early release.

The Cost of US-Russian Relations is Too High

While the gains from the "reset" relationship have been exaggerated, the cost in terms of U.S. diminished security, geopolitical losses and moral authority has been high. The Obama Administration has disavowed linkages between its Russia policy components, as it placed punishing Russian misbehavior in one area by withholding concessions in another off limits.

There is good reason to believe, moreover, that Russian leaders do not take White House efforts to promote freedom and human rights seriously. They know that the U.S. Administration is chained to the "reset" and will do little more than verbally object to the Kremlin's abuses of human rights and the rule of law. The talk of democracy is "for domestic [U.S.] consumption," said one official Russian visitor to Washington last fall. This perceived American softness is perhaps one reason why Medvedev told the *Financial Times* on June 18, "Let me tell you that no one wishes the re-election of Barack Obama as U.S. president as I do." Nowhere is the Russian interest in the Administration's policy as clear as in the area of arms control and missile defenses.

U.S. Missile Defense: Next Casualty of the "Reset"?

The Administration may be jeopardizing U.S. and allied missile defenses. The New START treaty is a cornerstone of President Obama's dangerously naïve policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament known as "getting to zero", i.e. achieving a world without nuclear weapons. This is particularly pernicious when North Korea and Pakistan are building up their nuclear forces, and while Iran is unveiling its nuclear missile arsenal is threatening to unleash a nuclear arms race in the Middle East, which may involve Saudi, and also possibly Egyptian and Turkish efforts to acquire deployable nuclear weapons.

Instead of moving to address some of these potential threats, the Obama Administration first announced its decision to abandon the original U.S. ballistic missile defense plans—the so-called third site for missile defense—in Poland and the Czech Republic. The timing of the announcement was as insensitive as it was embarrassing: on the 70th anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Poland. Second, as *The Telegraph* reported in February, the United States agreed to provide the Russians with sensitive information about the U.K.'s Trident submarines—Britain's strategic deterrent—to win Russia's agreement to New START, despite earlier objections of the British government.[1]

[1] Matthew Moore, Gordon Rayner, and Christopher Hope, "WikiLeaks Cables: US Agrees to Tell Russia Britain's Nuclear Secrets," *The Telegraph*, February 4, 2011, at

In such an environment, the US should work to protect and develop its missile defense capabilities. However, the preamble of the New START treaty just ratified last year is a Trojan horse that establishes a link between strategic offensive and defensive weapons. This connection enables the Russians to threaten withdrawal from the treaty if the United States continues to expand its ballistic missile defenses.

Moreover, the Obama Administration is conducting negotiations with Moscow that may lead to curtailment of U.S. missile defenses in Europe. The problems associated with Obama's Cold War–style arms control approach are particularly apparent in the areas of strategic arms, missile defense, and short-range nuclear weapons. The U.S. House of Representatives is clearly aware of this danger, as its version of the defense bill contains a provision that would prevent the Administration from spending any funds on providing the Russian Federation with sensitive U.S. missile defense technology. It is imperative that the United States refuse to accept any limits on its ballistic missile defenses. At the same time, the Administration should insist that Russia bring its massive short range nuclear arsenal on par with that of the U.S.

Dangers and Disparities in Short Range Nuclear Weapons

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union deployed thousands of short-range nuclear weapons capable of being used against military and civilian targets. Russia's current military doctrine focuses on deterring the U.S. while winning regional conflicts. This doctrine allows the use of nuclear weapons "in response to large-scale aggression with conventional weapons in situations critical to the national security of the Russian Federation and its allies." It does not exclude preemptive nuclear strikes in situations critical to Russia's national security and state survival. Russia's most recent draft national security strategy imagines possible future military conflicts over energy resources and emphasizes the need to modernize its armed forces.

During the recent wars in Chechnya (1994–1996 and 1999–2004) and Georgia (2008), Russia's conventional military forces were generally unprepared and ineffective. As a result, Russia has come to view its nuclear arsenal, especially its advantage in short-range nuclear weapons, as an important component of its national power in regional conflict along its periphery. The Kremlin realizes the strategic significance of using its short range nuclear weapons to gain political leverage, especially as it pertains to NATO member states.

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http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/wikileaks/8304654/WikiLeaks-cables-US-agrees-to-tell-Russia-Britains-nuclear-secrets.html (June 20, 2011).

In the past, Moscow has threatened to deploy Iskander short-range nuclear missiles in Kaliningrad, a Russian exclave on the coast of the Baltic Sea, between the borders of Poland and Lithuania. Recently, Russia's Army General Makhmut Gareyev, President of the Academy of Military Sciences, went so far as to say that "The nuclear weapons of all major nuclear powers are ultimately designed to be used against Russia, whether we want to admit it or not." This statement, regardless of its obvious paranoia, goes a long way toward explaining Russia's insistence on its short-range nuclear weapons overhaul. For Moscow, nuclear arms are the weapon of choice in certain situations. Short-range nuclear weapons are likely to be used when Moscow faces a threat that it cannot counter with conventional weapons. Short-range nuclear weapons are thought to have de-escalation qualities by demonstrating Russia's will to resolve a conflict by using them early.

Russian nuclear policy is characterized by a perceived need to use short-range nuclear weapons in many scenarios. For example, the Russian leadership has stated that if the NATO alliance were to use precision conventional weapons against Russian troops, Russia would be forced to respond with short-range nuclear weapons. Conflicts on its borders, especially in Chechnya and the Northern Caucasus and with China (over the Far East), or conflicts involving strategically important Central Asia, might also prompt Moscow to use short-range nuclear weapons.

Russia's military exercises conclusively demonstrate that Moscow sees nuclear weapons as having both offensive and defensive applications. In September 2009, during the *Zapad* ("West") military exercise, the Russian air force reportedly practiced using short-range nuclear weapons against Poland, a NATO ally. In July 2010, Russia conducted *Vostok* ("East"), a large-scale military exercise in the Far East, and simulated a low-yield nuclear strike consistent with its policy of using short-range nuclear weapons in regional conflicts. The enemy in this exercise was China; the Russians worry about the numerical and potential technological disparity between the two countries.

Finally, the Russian military industrial base is undergoing a radical reform that will significantly reshape its personnel, technology, and organization. The goal of this reform is to reduce the Soviet-era military bureaucracy and develop small but well-equipped rapid deployment forces. Russian military spending is limited at times due to the country's poor economic performance. Especially after the recent global economic crisis, Russia found it challenging to provide the funding to maintain a large and effective conventional army. The ambitious new $640 billion procurement package seeks to overcome these difficulties. In the meantime, Moscow will continue to regard Russia's nuclear weapons as a force equalizer against more technologically advanced or powerful nations.

Russia views its nuclear arsenal generally, and its short-range nuclear arsenal in particular, as a vital and legitimate means to counterbalance conventional superiority by NATO and a variety of plausible threats from China, as well as a powerful deterrent in regional conflicts. In tactical nuclear weapons negotiations, Moscow is all but certain to make far-reaching demands, which will result in another treaty that is lopsided in Russia's favor and leaves the U.S. exposed to threats by other countries and non-state actors.

It is never too early in the arms control treaty process for Senators, individually and in groupings, to exercise their power to advise the President and his Administration. This is the case, in part, because the Administration can make significant concessions even in the course of organizing future negotiations. Senators should make their concerns known even absent a public statement by the President regarding the U.S. negotiating stance. Indeed, this is precisely the path that 41 Senators took on March 22, 2011, in sending President Obama a letter expressing their concerns about what may be contained in a new arms control treaty with Russia.

Energy Nationalism Threatens Friends and Allies

Russia's energy nationalism should also be a source of frustration in Washington. From an American perspective, growing European dependence on energy imports from monopolistic Russian oil and gas exporters is a negative long-term geopolitical trend.

Energy issues spill over into the realm of the geopolitical balance-of-power. When energy prices skyrocketed in 2007-2008, Russia quickly evolved into an assertive anti-status quo power that challenged the U.S. and its allies on many fronts, especially in the territory of the former Soviet Union, as the 2008 Russian-Georgian Five Day War and continuous pressure on Ukraine demonstrated. There are also ongoing frictions in the Balkans and the Middle East, where Russia has opposed Western policies. This happens both because of the ample funding available to finance a more ambitious foreign policy due to energy revenues and the self-assurance which comes with general economic prosperity, as well as from Moscow's tendency to use energy as a foreign policy tool. As oil prices rise, it is safe to expect Russia's cockiness to return.

Russia's strategic goals include preventing countries around its borders from becoming pro-American as well as increasing control over the transportation of Russia hydrocarbons through the territory of its neighbors. Furthermore, the Kremlin aims to control the export of oil and gas from neighboring countries by directing their flow via the Russian pipeline system. By locating pipelines and gas storage facilities in Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey, Russia connects them to Moscow with ties that bind. Sometimes, these ties also include lucrative personal economic deals, as demonstrated by the employment of Gerhardt Schroeder as Chairman of the North Stream gas pipeline consortium, and similar arrangements for other prominent European politicians.

Russia is willing to use force to achieve its geo-economic goals as well. Control of energy corridors from the Caspian Sea to the Black Sea and beyond was an objective of the Russian military operation against Georgia in August 2008. This has been clearly confirmed over the years by incidents involving delays in energy supplies to Azerbaijan, the Baltic states, Belarus, Croatia, Georgia, Serbia, Slovakia, and Ukraine, to mention a few. . Many argue that Moscow's

international energy behavior leaves its partners insecure and makes observers doubt that Russia is a responsible player, especially when unconstrained by competition and powerful investment sources.

Despite the fall in energy demand across Europe, Russia raced to secure its natural gas market share and bypass Ukraine, the principal transit country. It is building Nord Stream and South Stream pipeline systems. Europe may diminish its dependence on Russian gas by boosting an alternative pipeline, Nabucco, but in order to do so, it requires U.S. political support for Turkey, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan to cooperate on this mega-project. However, unlike the Clinton and the George W. Bush Administrations, the Obama Administration has downgraded Eurasian energy on its priority list. Very little political support materialized, which jeopardizes the future of Nabucco. However, it is primarily the European Union members' responsibility to diversify its sources of natural gas. Unfortunately, so far, no necessary leadership from Europe has materialized in this case.

In sum, the developed world economies and energy net importers in general will benefit from greater stability, security, transparency, and the rule of law in energy-exporting states, to ensure that oil and gas remain readily available, ample, affordable, and safe. However, the Kremlin views energy as a tool of assertive foreign policy and uses it broadly, often without much concern for diplomatic niceties. If current trends prevail, this decade may see the Kremlin translating this energy monopoly into increasing foreign and security policy influence in Europe. In particular, Russia is seeking recognition of its "zone of privileged interests" in the post-Soviet space and Eastern Europe. This has already affected geopolitical issues important to the West, such as NATO expansion, ballistic missile defense, the tension around the status of Kosovo, and Moscow's increasing influence in the post-Soviet space.

Mounting Pressure on Belarus, Georgia and Ukraine

In addition to energy dependence of the post-Soviet states, there are broader geopolitical concerns with Obama's foreign policy toward Russia and Eurasia. In July 2009, Vice President Joe Biden visited Ukraine and Georgia. The mere fact that he ventured there two weeks *after* President Obama's visit to Moscow indicates that the White House has downgraded its relationship with these two countries.

Biden correctly rejected Russia's claims to a 19th-century-style sphere of influence, but he fell short in addressing the national security concerns for both states. This was an ominous development. In the run up to the Ukrainian presidential elections in January 2010, the Kremlin began ratcheting up the pressure on Kyiv and encouraging separatism in Russian-speaking parts of Ukraine, especially the Crimea.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited the Caucasus a year ago, in July of 2010. She told the Georgians that democracy is going to provide them with security. Senior State Department officials said that South Caucasus nations "over-securitize" problems of their region. However, Moscow is not paying attention to this rhetoric. Since the 2008 Russian-Georgian war ended, it is building up its four military bases in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Russia extended its presence in the Black Sea naval base of Sevastopol (Ukraine) until 2042 and in the Armenian military base of Gyumri until 2044, with barely a peep from Washington. These steps ensure Russia's control over strategically important Black Sea and the Caucasus region. Moscow is uneasy with the US presence in Central Asia necessary for the resupply of our troops and NATO forces in Afghanistan, and has repeatedly signaled that it wants the US to leave.

In the last two years, Russia has also been playing a dangerous game in Belarus, demanding the sale of state-owned enterprises to Russian business and slowly but surely isolating the country from its Western neighbors and the Euro-Atlantic zone. Clearly, the heavy-handed policies of President Alexander Lukashenka play into Moscow's hands, but if Belarus is absorbed into Russia as a result of Moscow's geopolitical game, the re-establishment of a long Polish-Russian border in Europe may become a destabilizing security factor.

To summarize, the Administration's approach to the "reset" policy with Russia creates the impression that it effectively recognizes Russia's zone of privileged interests in the former Soviet empire and beyond. At times, it seems that the Administration is more committed to the "reset" policy with Moscow than to U.S. friends and allies.

The Iran-Venezuela Gambit

President Obama's gambit to secure Moscow's help on Iran remains highly uncertain. While Russia (and China) and the US voted to impose watered-down sanctions on Tehran, Moscow is already dialing back its support, denouncing US unilateral sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

The Iranian agenda is clearly separate from that of Russia, the Kremlin views Iran as a geopolitical wedge against the U.S. and its allies in the Gulf region and the Middle East. Russia's commercial interests in Iran span from billions in arms sales and the transfer of nuclear and space technology to lucrative oil and gas contracts for state-controlled Russian companies. Therefore, Russian support for Iran's nuclear program and arms sales are not only lucrative but reflect a geopolitical agenda that is at least 20 years old. While Medvedev did not completely rule out sanctions, Putin and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov all but rejected the imposition of stronger sanctions on Iran.

In June 2010, the United States was able to pass the fourth round of sanctions against Tehran's regime through the United Nations Security Council, and Russia annulled the sale of the S–300

anti-aircraft missile systems to Tehran. These were valuable accomplishments. Yet in August 2010, Russia supplied enriched uranium to Iran's civilian reactor in Bushehr, violating the spirit of the sanctions and handing the ayatollahs a victory in the face of increasing international pressure. The reactor began initial operations in May 2011. The chances of additional Russian support for UN sanctions against Iran remain minimal. The "reset" policy on Iran has run its course.

Meanwhile, Russia remains the principal geopolitical patron of the ailing Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez. He recently announced that his nation will purchase dozens of Russian tanks, helicopters, and other arms for over $2 billion, signaling growing military and strategic ties between the two countries. Russia supplied Kalashnikov assault rifle factories to arm 500,000 Venezuelans. Russian companies are getting exclusive energy deals courtesy of Chavez. This anti-American and anti-democratic alliance in which Russia remains active in the Western hemisphere bodes ill for the U.S. and its allies.

Conclusion: Time to Reset the "Reset"

The Obama Administration and Congress need to recognize that the "reset" with Russia, which requires huge payoffs for small results, is in dire need of a reassessment. The U.S. should pursue its national interests in relations with Moscow instead of chasing a mirage. The U.S. and Russia have mutual interests in opposing Islamic radicalism and terrorism, nonproliferation, counter-narcotics, boosting trade and investment, and expanding tourism, business, and exchanges. Twenty years after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of communism, Russia's anti-American policies should be over.

In order to reaffirm America's priorities when dealing with Russia, the U.S. should concentrate on its own national interests, as well as the values of freedom and justice. Facing these unchanging political realities and impeding threats to U.S. interests, the U.S. should rethink its strategy for engaging with Russia's leadership.

The Administration needs to stop its policy of "pleasing Moscow" and instead add pressure on Russia to start a "reset" of its own policies. In particular, Congress should ensure that missile defenses are developed for the benefit of American troops and allies and prevent the Administration from granting far-reaching concessions to Russia in negotiating short-range nuclear weapons deals.

Congress has an important role to play in changing the relations with Russia in the energy field for the better, for the benefit of the Russian and American peoples and our European allies. It is time to make the Russian oil and gas sector more transparent and open to foreign investment while curbing the use of energy as a geopolitical tool, which endangers Russia's neighbors.

Congress should send a strong signal that it cares about America's friends in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and expand US ties with those who reach out for freedom. Finally Congress should enable the U.S. to deny visas to corrupt Russian businessmen, examine their banking practices and acquisitions, and target Russian police and prosecutors who fabricate evidence, and judges who rubber stamp convictions, which is what the bipartisan S. 1039, the expanded "Sergey Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act" bill aims to do.

Certainly, the Russian people can benefit from its relations with America. Russia, and important emerging market, a large consumer, and a cornucopia of raw materials, should have access to U.S. science—especially health sciences, technology, and investment—if Moscow improves its foreign and domestic policies. However, Congress and the Administration should not tolerate Russian mischief, either domestic or geopolitical. The U.S. should not shy away from articulating its priorities and values to its Russian partners—and play hardball when necessary.

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Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. And Ambassador Sestanovich.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE STEVE SESTANOVICH, GEORGE F. KENNAN SENIOR FELLOW FOR RUSSIAN AND EURASIAN STUDIES, COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. SESTANOVICH. Madam Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to join in today's discussion. The 20th anniversary of the Soviet Union's collapse is a good moment to reflect on Russian-American relations. I too wish we could hear what Tom Lantos had to say about it.

I will focus my remarks today on three issues: First, how Russia and the U.S. restored broadly cooperative ties after 2008; second, why their relations are still marked by frustration and friction; and, third, how to address areas of disagreement going forward.

Three years ago many experts thought Russian-American relations were in for a prolonged chill. Their expectations proved almost entirely wrong. Russia and the U.S. ratified a new treaty on strategic arms reductions. They have cooperated in support of military operations in Afghanistan. They joined in passing a new round of U.N. sanctions against Iran. They collaborate against the proliferation of missile materials and international drug trafficking.

Even popular attitudes are beginning to change. Last year the percentage of Russians who had a favorable view of the United States reached its highest level, 60 percent, in a decade and a half. The reset has, of course, focused on issues where the practical benefits for both sides are clear-cut: Predictability in strategic arms reductions, nuclear non-proliferation, counterterrorism and so on.

But the fact that the benefits of cooperation are obvious does not make them less important to our national interests. And there are tentative signs that Russia may be rethinking—in our direction—what is in its interest.

In light of these benefits, why does the reset evoke so many mixed feelings? There is clear hesitation in both countries about the next steps that seem to be on the agenda. Madam Chairman, both you and Mr. Berman have rightly mentioned many of these problems, from aggression against Georgia to human rights abuses. In the U.S. there is ambivalence about graduating Russia from the coverage of the Jackson-Vanik amendment. In Russia there is ambivalence about cooperating with NATO on missile defense.

The legacy of the Cold War plays a part in these attitudes, but something deeper is at work. The next steps of the reset require a level of mutual respect and trust that Russia and the U.S. have not yet developed. Russia's domestic evolution since the Soviet collapse has been deeply disappointing. Its own President complains of corruption and lack of political competition. He is right; Russia lags behind other post-Communist nations in its embrace of democratic norms. In this light, it is hardly surprising that Members of Congress hesitate to abandon legislation that embodies our human rights concerns.

Russia's reluctance to work with NATO and missile defense may originate in Cold War thinking, but that is not the only factor. Even close allies have great difficulty sharing information and plans that affect their ultimate security, and Russia and NATO are not close allies.

Given these obstacles to cooperation, does the reset need a pause? I know that is in the title of today's hearing, Madam Chairman, but it is the wrong approach. It does not serve our interest to undo cooperation developed over 20 years by Presidents of both parties. Our troops in Afghanistan don't want to pause, nor do our New START Treaty inspectors. But we do need to carry forward the reset without pretending that Russia and the United States have obtained a greater degree of mutual trust and respect than they have.

To keep this policy on the realistic footing it requires, we need to develop relations step by step. Let me say a word about how to do so on two important issues. Congress is, for good reason, uncomfortable about graduating Russia from Jackson-Vanik unless we have a clearly articulated policy toward human rights and democracy in Russia. Legislation to take the place of Jackson-Vanik can play a part. Members of both houses have proposed to focus on the worst abuses by individual Russian officials. Such measures, carefully designed, may strengthen American policy, but they are not the end of the story. Congress needs to look at other ways of modernizing our human rights policy in the spirit of Jackson-Vanik by increasing support for civil society groups, for electoral monitoring and so forth.

As for missile defense, if Russia resists full-blown cooperation with NATO, other approaches are available to it. This should hardly be a crisis in Russian-American relations. Administration officials have publicly suggested that the best way for Russia to explore the pluses and minuses of greater cooperation is to get inside the tent. This is good advice.

The agreement to create a joint data exchange center, signed back in 2000, is one place to start. It would be a clearinghouse for trading early warning information on missile launches; 11 years later it is still waiting to be implemented.

Madam Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to discuss these and the other issues with you and your colleagues and with the other witnesses here today.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sestanovich follows:]

Stephen Sestanovich
Columbia University/Council on
Foreign Relations

Testimony
Presented before a Hearing of
The House Foreign Affairs Committee
July 7, 2011

"Evaluating the Reset:
Is It Time for a Pause?"

Madam Chairman and Members of the Committee: Thank you for inviting me to join in today's very timely discussion. As you know, this year marks the twentieth anniversary of the collapse of the Soviet Union – a good occasion to reflect on the state of Russian-American relations.

I'd like to focus my remarks today on three questions. First, how did Russia and the United States manage to restore broadly cooperative ties after 2008? Second, why are their relations marked by lingering frustration and even friction? Third, what is the best way to address areas of tension and disagreement in the future?

Three years ago, many experts – in both countries -- believed that Russian-American relations were in for a prolonged chill. In the wake of Russian aggression against Georgia, some Washington commentators feared that Moscow's foreign policy might be entering a new phase of confrontation, even conquest. Russian forecasters claimed that the West was out to weaken (and more excitable ones said, to dismember) their country.

These expectations have been almost entirely confounded. Russia and the United States have ratified and begun to implement a new treaty on strategic arms reductions.

They have cooperated in support of NATO military operations in Afghanistan. They joined in passing a new round of sanctions against Iran in the U.N. Security Council. They have collaborated in efforts to control the proliferation of fissile materials and to limit international narcotics trafficking. Next week, the Russian foreign minister and Secretary of State Clinton will sign agreements on two contentious issues of long standing – visas and child adoptions. Even popular attitudes have seen a change. American officials like to point out that last year the percentage of Russians who had a "favorable" view of the United States reached its highest level – 60% -- in a decade and a half.

Time and again during this revival of cooperation, many knowledgeable commentators argued that the so-called "reset" had reached its high-water mark. Few further benefits, we heard, could be expected. These predictions have also not held up well. Take one recent example: when Russia abstained on U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973 authorizing military operations against Libya, some saw it as a sign that Moscow would not work with the West in responding to the Arab Spring. Soon enough, however, President Medvedev joined his G-8 colleagues in announcing that it was time for Colonel Qadhafi to go. When I was in Moscow last month, Russian officials actually asked me why NATO's Operation Unified Protector was taking so long to achieve its aims.

In expanding their cooperation the two sides, of course, have focused on issues where the practical benefits for both are most clear-cut. For obvious reasons, both Russia and the U.S. like the predictability of drawing down strategic forces by agreement. Both see Iran's nuclear program – and the prospect of state-failure in Afghanistan – as

destabilizing. But the fact that the shared benefits of cooperation are obvious does not make them any less real. States do not always act in their own interest. Here, at least, they are doing so. (Other governments have been less cooperative: China, The New York Times recently reported, does not allow its territory to be used to supply NATO operations in Afghanistan.) There are also some tentative signs of Russian readiness to re-think what is in its interest, even when the result is costly. Real money was lost when Moscow canceled the sale of an advanced air-defense system to Iran.

The "reset" has served American interests in important ways. Why, then, do so many have such mixed feelings about it? Many – in both countries -- are clearly hesitant about taking the next steps that seem to be on the agenda. In the U.S., there is real ambivalence about "graduating" Russia from the coverage of the Jackson-Vanik amendment. And this, even though the problem that the amendment was designed to address – the denial of free emigration to Soviet Jews – long ago ceased to exist. In Russia, there is a similar ambivalence about working with NATO to develop an overlapping system of missile defense – even though the nuclear competition of the Cold War is also long since over.

Many observers treat such attitudes as proof that neither country has shaken the legacy of the Cold War. There is perhaps something to this explanation, but to my mind it is not the principal factor. The next steps of the "reset" – whether we're talking about Jackson-Vanik "graduation" or about cooperative missile defense – are simply hard. They require a level of mutual respect and trust that Russia and the U.S. have not developed – and for understandable reasons.

Russia's domestic evolution since the Soviet collapse has been deeply disappointing, to many of its own citizens and to its friends abroad. Its own president complains of human rights abuses, corruption, and lack of real political competition. All of these, he says (with admirable honesty), will stunt the country's economic development and global standing unless they are corrected. He is absolutely right, and most of his critics make these charges far more emphatically than he does. It is not surprising, then, that other post-Communist nations -- those that have embraced and institutionalized democratic norms more fully than Russia – also enjoy greater international respect. Nor is it surprising that members of Congress, seeing these trends, hesitate to close the book on a piece of legislation that has for decades embodied American human rights concerns.

Madam Chairman, the Russian national security establishment has its own hesitations about next steps in the "reset," and these too are understandable. It has resisted the idea of working with NATO on a common approach to missile defense. Here the influence of "old thinking" is undoubted. The Russian military was for years untouched by reform and new ideas, and many of its arguments against missile defense cooperation are absurd. But Cold War nostalgia is not the only thing holding it back. Even close allies have great difficulty sharing information and plans that could affect their ultimate security. And Russia and NATO are by no means close allies. Only a little distrust is needed to make cooperation in such a sensitive area seem impractical and undesirable.

Given these obstacles to cooperation, what is the best way to handle the next phase of the "reset?" The title of today's hearing raises the idea of a "pause." I might

note that some members of the Russian Duma, especially its communists and nationalists, also like this idea. But it is not the right approach. It does not serve American interests to put on hold the very real cooperation that has been developed over the past two – indeed, the past twenty – years, by presidents of both parties. Our troops in Afghanistan don't want a "pause." Our New START treaty inspectors don't want a "pause." The NATO ambassadors who traveled from Brussels to Sochi this week to meet with President Medvedev to discuss expanded cooperation also seem to think their work is worth continuing.

We need to carry forward the "reset" without pretending that Russia and the United States have attained a greater degree of mutual trust and respect than they have. The "reset" was born of realism about the two sides' interests and values alike. To keep this policy on a realistic footing in the future, we will have to develop relations step by step.

Let me close with a word about how each side might put this approach into practice. Congress is, for good reason, uncomfortable about "graduating" Russia from Jackson-Vanik unless the United States continues to have a clearly articulated policy toward human rights and democracy in Russia. It should therefore seriously explore legislation that can take the amendment's place. There are many ways to modernize our efforts to support democratic development. Members of both Houses, including Senator Cardin and Representative McGovern, have proposed legislation focused on the worst abuses by individual Russian officials. Appropriately configured and with an eye to future abuses, such measures can strengthen American policy. And they need not be the

end of the story. Congress might also aim to increase support for civil-society groups, for electoral monitoring, and so forth.

Similarly, if Russia does not want to enter into a full-blown cooperative missile defense system, more tentative and exploratory ventures are also available to it. Administration officials have publicly suggested that the best way for Russian policymakers, strategic planners and military officers to understand the pluses and minuses of greater cooperation is to "get inside the tent." This is surely good advice, and there are many ways to follow it. President Clinton and President Putin signed an agreement back in 2000 to create a Joint Data Exchange Center -- a clearing-house in which to trade early-warning information on missile launches. Eleven years later, this goal is still waiting to be implemented.

Madam Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to discuss these issues with you, with members of the committee, and with the distinguished witnesses attending today's hearing. Thank you.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you to all of our witnesses. I will begin the question and answer period, thank you.

The news that the Kremlin has banned Boris Nemtsov, a leader of Russia's democratic movement as I spoke about in my opening statement, from leaving Russia if he returns from his current visit to France, is I believe a dramatic evidence that Putin's government intends to continue to persecute its opponents and prevent their participation in the upcoming parliamentary elections. This is more evidence, if more were needed, that the Obama administration's reset policy of giving Moscow one concession after another in an effort to buy better behavior from Russia has failed.

And let me ask each of the witnesses three questions. I know our time is limited.

What can the U.S. do to provide assistance to Russia's democratic movement efforts to bring democracy to their country?

Number two, what steps should the Obama administration take regarding this latest action by the Kremlin about Mr. Nemtsov?

And, three, what will the impact on the democratic movement be if the U.S. reaction to this act is only mild criticism?

And we will start with Dr. Swett.

Ms. SWETT. Well, I think that the most critical thing that the U.S. Government can do—and this is where I think there are concerns with the way the reset policy has been perceived both within Russia and outside of Russia—that is, that we must get away from the notion that we completely delink Russia's behavior and performance on issues of human rights, rule of law and democracy from all of our other broad-ranging concerns in our relationship to Russia.

The notion of delinking what are our most profound values and which, frankly, are the values that ensure the ongoing stability, strength, vitality, and success of any society from other concerns is, I think, where we begin to go off the track.

And so I believe that in specific response to your question we need to once again make it clear to the Russian Government that we will not confine our response to their slide away from democracy and toward authoritarianism.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Ms. SWETT. To simply, you know, mild and weak-kneed protestations that are routinely ignored and frankly are viewed as simply something for domestic consumption.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Ms. SWETT. And that is understood not only by the Russian Government but by the very democracy activists, the very human rights leaders who we need to express strong support for.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Dr. Cohen, and Ambassador?

Mr. COHEN. First of all, Congress could, I think, invite Boris Nemtsov at the earliest opportunity to testify about the conditions of democracy and human rights in Russia. Mr. Nemtsov is a former first Deputy Prime Minister. He was a very high-ranking official. He is no extremist, he is no terrorist, and this is inexcusable that he was treated like that. He also was jailed for 10 days for attending a nonviolent demonstration.

Secondly, what I already mentioned, the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act against people who are abusing the old laws, against people who are abusing their old legal system. And just as we failed to send strong messages of when Khodorkovsky was first jailed in 2003, when Magnitsky got killed in 2009—these are signature events that the Russian Government is watching like a hawk, how does the West react?

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. COHEN. Not only do we need to react but our Western European allies also need to react.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Dr. Cohen. Mr. Ambassador.

Mr. SESTANOVICH. Madam Chairman, it would be hard to think of a better way for Putin's government to look like Leonid Brezhnev's government than by what they did with Boris Nemtsov. And it is the kind of opportunity for senior officials in the legislative and executive branches to convey to their Russian counterparts that if the reset is to advance, actions of this kind are a threat to it.

I agree with my colleagues; the right response in the first instance is attention, attention, attention. Dr. Cohen is exactly right. The Magnitsky bill has gotten a lot of attention in Moscow.

I would add two other points. Our friends in Europe and throughout Europe, and particularly in European Parliament and the Council of Europe have taken the lead in talking about a lot of these issues. We want to speak with one voice with them.

Secondly, it seems to me important that American efforts to support Russian civil society, election monitoring, and other activities of this kind be fully funded.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much. Mr. Berman is recognized.

Mr. BERMAN. Well, thank you. The chair's question brought a certain level of consensus to the three panelists in terms of linkage and particular reference to the Magnitsky bill.

Boris Nemtsov was always thought of as one of the most enlightened and progressive thinkers of the post-Soviet era, and did some amazing things as a local governor and later on in Moscow, and it was sort of a shocking development to see that action taken.

But on the larger scale, Dr. Cohen and Ambassador Sestanovich seem to have very different conclusions about the reset. Dr. Cohen talks about naiveté, paltry gains, totally misplaced judgment by the administration in focusing on Medvedev. And Ambassador Sestanovich thinks the notion of a pause right now is a mistake.

In a careful, calculated way, once you continue to pursue the reset with very realistic understandings about our differences, and without any intent of sweeping those differences under the rug, I would like each of you to—perhaps starting with you Ambassador Sestanovich—to take the fundamental thrust of Dr. Cohen's testimony and address where you differ from it, and Dr. Cohen with Ambassador Sestanovich.

Mr. SESTANOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Berman. I would dispute the idea that the principal theme of the reset has been pleasing Russia. I would say it has been to find areas where cooperation between Russia and the United States can serve American interests. And I think the record has been good there. And I don't think that the Russian Government has been particularly pleased by the way in which American officials have kept the issue of Russia's domestic evolution prominent in their public discussion.

Dr. Cohen and others have talked about Russian aims in a way that I find perfectly accurate. There is, to my mind, no doubt that Russia would like to divide NATO. Madam Chairman, you said that yourself. I don't think there is any doubt that Russia would like to strengthen a sphere of influence on its borders. I think it wants the international respect that enables it to ignore criticism.

But my question would be, to quote a well-known American politician, "How's it working out?" I don't think all that well. Just this week the Ambassadors of NATO and the Secretary General went to Russia to say Russia's objections to NATO's missile defense plans are a nonstarter. You know, let's keep talking, but we are not interested in the kind of proposal you have in mind. They are getting nowhere there.

On a sphere of influence, the Russians began the Obama administration trying to bribe the Kyrgyz Government to oust the United

States from its base in Kyrgyzstan. Today that base is still there and the Russians have had to back off.

International respect. I say in my testimony that Russia enjoys less respect internationally than other post-Communist nations. And this hearing and the comments of all the witnesses and of all the members indicate that Russia's internal evolution remains a hot topic in the West.

Mr. BERMAN. Let me just, since there is not really enough time for you to respond, I will use my last 20 seconds to make my own point and hopefully we can get your response later.

But I have vivid memories. By 2008, it was that administration, the administration that preceded Obama's, that had delinked all issues. It was pursuing U.S. nuclear cooperation with Russia even as Iran was—Russia was doing nothing to help us deal with Iran's nuclear weapons program. It was pushing the missile defense without getting any particular broader support from Russia on any issue. Every issue was in its own different category, and there was no linkage.

I do think one wants to have a coherent and comprehensive policy here and that things are much closer to that these days than they were 2½ years ago.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Berman. Mr. Rohrabacher is recognized, the Subcommittee on Oversight Investigations chairman.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

Ms. Swett, how many political prisoners are there in Russia today?

Ms. SWETT. Well, I couldn't give you a specific figure on how many political prisoners there are, but I can tell you there are millions of intimidated Russians.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I am not asking that.

Ms. SWETT. There are untold numbers of people in Russia who are intimidated from fully exercising their rights to——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. No, I am not asking you that at all. How many political—you have an organization that focuses on political prisoners. You cannot tell me the number of political prisoners that Russia has. Of the deaths—you said there were 150 deaths of journalists in Russia.

Ms. SWETT. Yes. Unexplained violent deaths.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Over what period of time?

Ms. SWETT. Over a period of about 7 years now.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. 7 years. So in the last 7 years there have been 150 journalists who have met death, of some sort of violent death.

Ms. SWETT. Have met their deaths under extremely suspicious circumstances; not in a war zone, but while covering corruption, human rights abuses.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Could you send us for the record the list of people you consider specifically political prisoners?

Ms. SWETT. I would be happy to.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. And a list of those journalists?

Ms. SWETT. Absolutely.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I went to a meeting with Russian journalists who were complaining, and their numbers were far less than what

you are presenting to us today. And when I questioned them specifically—you were there, Ileana—whether or not they were blaming these deaths on the administration, meaning Putin and Medvedev, or whether they were just saying that Medvedev and Putin had not done enough to follow through after the deaths to deter future type attacks, they were very clear that they were not blaming Medvedev and Putin for these deaths. And this is a whole different image that is being presented to us today.

Mr. Sestanovich, when we worked in the Reagan White House, wasn't that your impression, as it was mine, that President Reagan expected that someday we would actually work on a joint missile defense system with a democratic Russia?

Mr. SESTANOVICH. Uh——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. The answer is yes, because I was there for a while.

Mr. SESTANOVICH. I think the answer is certainly yes, Congressman. It would have to be described as his hope. I don't know whether it was his strong expectation.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Right. That was his goal.

Mr. SESTANOVICH. Yeah.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. His goal was to have a situation with Russia. Was his goal to continue NATO after Russia pulled back from Eastern Europe and went through a democratic process?

Mr. SESTANOVICH. Gee, it would only be common sense to think it was.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Yeah. Would you think it would be fair for Russia to think of that as a belligerent act for us, instead of—when they had pulled back all of their troops from Eastern Europe, but instead we expanded NATO to their doorstep?

Mr. SESTANOVICH. No.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. You wouldn't think that that would be considered belligerent? How about if Russia during that time period decided that they would send nuclear weapons to, let's say, Venezuela or some other country that was deciding they didn't like the United States?

Mr. SESTANOVICH. In politics, Congressman, I think you have to ask what the purpose of any action is, and I guess I would be a little disturbed by thinking about what the purpose of such an action on the Russian part would be.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I would think the Russians might be concerned that maybe we weren't being as friendly as we said we were going to be, once the disintegration of the Communist Party leadership in Russia took place, by us expanding NATO to their borders and expanding a missile defense system which would neutralize their missiles.

Listen, I am not saying these things. These things are not—and the people are saying, is this a moral equivalency argument? The answer is, yes, it is. And the bottom line is we have lots of problems in the United States, and so do the Russians. For example, we heard that today Madam Chairman mentioned a statement about a billy club and a protest.

Dr. Cohen, am I mistaken that there are protests that are permitted in Russia today as compared to the Soviet Union? There were no protests. Am I wrong that you go to the kiosk and you can

actually find newspapers that are printed against the regime, and even in broadcasts you can hear radio people like Rush Limbaugh in Russia complaining about Mr. Putin. Well, my visits to Russia, people say that that is what they are hearing; and these are not communists, former communists, so they are all wrong; is that correct?

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Rohrabacher, you know as well as I do——

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. The time is up. But you can answer, just a short answer if you could.

Mr. COHEN. I thought I was asked a question.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. I know but his time is up.

Mr. COHEN. All right. Russian national television is under 100 percent state control. Russian protesters are beaten by the heavily armed special police called the OMON. And yes, there are political prisoners in Russia, Mr. Rohrabacher. Amnesty International.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much. Mr. Faleomavaega, the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, is recognized.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the dialogue and certainly the statements that have been made from our witnesses. It is very interesting to note that we have two highly respected experts who have such divergent views concerning our relations, our bilateral relations, with Russia.

In the 4 years that I held the chairmanship of the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific it was my privilege to visit Central Asian countries. And one of the things that always seems to gnaw at me are the criticisms that we say that these Central Asian countries are not moving fast enough to become full democracies.

I suspect that probably 99 percent of our community, the country, in our country, probably have no idea that these Central Asian countries were colonies of the Soviet Union for some 100 years. So when we talk about democracy and human rights and all these issues, certainly very, very high as far as we are concerned as a country, but these countries have had a very different mentality that they were living under, under the former Soviet Union.

As I recall, I think it was a couple of years ago that President Medvedev for the first time ever since after the Cold War, he visited Berlin and he gave what I thought was one of the very profound speeches that I have ever read and tried to pay it a little attention was the fact that, why are Western countries so put out about having to continue NATO, other than the fact that the Cold War is over, and as far as Russia is concerned, having this missile system wasn't really pointed at Iran, it was really pointed at Russia.

Now, I would like to ask Ambassador Sestanovich for his comment on this. Do you think that President Medvedev's observations of what has happened between—another problem here, when Russia became more democratic, or after the Cold War, it is my understanding that for some 10 years we failed as a country to assist Russia with its economic needs. And I want Ambassador Sestanovich to comment on that.

Mr. SESTANOVICH. Can I say a word first about Central Asia and not moving fast enough? Some are and some aren't. You have a very broad spectrum of developments there with Kyrgystan on the

verge of being a real democracy and others deep in dictatorship. I think there is undoubted Russian disappointment about the level of assistance that it got from the West in the 1990s. That doesn't mean there wasn't a lot of assistance and in fact—if you take together all assistance programs, it comes to a rather substantial level.

But I think most—a lot of Russians would tell you it all went into the pockets of criminal businessmen or corrupt bureaucrats. There is a sense that they didn't get much out of the assistance that you are talking about——

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I am sorry, Mr. Ambassador. My time is running, and I know Madam Chair is very good about this. Can you comment about what was she doing on the Jackson-Vanik law that seems to aid us all these years? Why should we get rid of this? Is it still relevant in our current relations with Russia?

Mr. SESTANOVICH. Jackson-Vanik doesn't do us much good anymore, and Russia should be graduated from Jackson-Vanik when it joins the WTO. But Congress can play an important role in finding and helping to articulate a new policy for human rights and democracy in Russia.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. The problem that I have is that sometimes the Members use Jackson-Vanik as leverage for other unrelated issues that come before the legislative calendar or the schedule that we have here as Members of the Congress.

Dr. Swett, I just wanted to ask you—I know as a great champion of human rights—I just wanted to ask you, when we have bilateral relations—let's take Russia—sometimes we have to make priorities. Our country is not an angel either. The fact that at the height of the Cold War, talk about human rights, forget it. We were propping up dictators all over the world just for the simple fact, as long as they are supportive of our policies, we didn't mind them abusing and all the terrible things that they did to their respective countries. And that didn't go very well.

I just wanted to ask you, you put all these things together, human rights, national security, economic interests, and democracy. How would you put human rights in this pot or this chop suey, if you will? Where does human rights come in? Should it be a number one priority? Or should it be considered in other issues that are more important than just human rights?

Ms. SWETT. Well, obviously, human rights——

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. My time is up.

Ms. SWETT. Obviously, human rights cannot be the only driver of our foreign policy. We have a huge range of concerns from our national security concerns, our economic concerns, our energy needs. There are a wide range of issues. But I think if the recent events, particularly in the Middle East, have shown us anything, it has shown us that we make a poor deal when we decide to settle for the so-called friendly tyrant relationship; that if a tyrant is friendly to our other interests, we sort of overlook their rampant abuses of their own population. Because we have seen stunning speeds of collapse of regimes in other parts of the world that we were convinced were our bulwarks in that region. So I think it needs to be a central priority but certainly not the only one.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Mr. Rivera of Florida is recognized.

Mr. RIVERA. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Before I begin with my questions, I also want to recognize and acknowledge Dr. Swett's father, Tom Lantos, and Mrs. Lantos for being here. Certainly his passion for human rights around the world has been noted. But in particular, I want to acknowledge his work on behalf of human rights in Cuba. I know for years and years he was an advocate and a friend of the human rights movement, and certainly his passion on behalf of human rights in Cuba in recent years, in particular with what we've seen on the human rights crackdowns under Raul Castro, Congressman Lantos' passion has been vindicated and his vision for what needs to be done with human rights in Cuba has been vindicated.

I will begin my questions with Ambassador Sestanovich regarding Belarus. As we know, one of the last bastions of Stalinist totalitarian communism rule in the world, other than Cuba and North Korea certainly, what exactly is Russia's role in sustaining that Stalinist dictatorship in Belarus? What has been their role perhaps in terms of making sure that there could be any types of reforms whatsoever, if any has existed, would that Stalinist dictatorship exist but for Russia's support? Just generally, what is their role?

Mr. SESTANOVICH. The Russians can't figure out what to do with Belarus, because you are right, they sustain it with subsidies, with cheap energy, with a measure of investment. But they put recurrent pressure on the regime. They have been cutting off electricity. They cut off gas. If there is any one government in the world that has done more to put the Lukashenko regime under threat than the Russian Government, I don't know which one it is. So there is a kind of incoherence there.

Mr. RIVERA. And anything that can be done on our part?

Mr. SESTANOVICH. We have to continue to work with Belarus' democratic neighbors, with other European countries that are very concerned and have kept their attention on this issue. Lukashenko has been a stubborn and rather resilient force. But he is totally isolated in Europe, and that can't last.

Mr. RIVERA. And certainly a threat to some of our critical allies such as Poland. We know what happened in terms of their relationship there.

But in my last 2 minutes, I will yield to Chairman Rohrabacher who I believe wanted to continue his colloquy.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much. Let me just note, I love Tom Lantos and I miss him every day and especially in the fight for human rights. And with that said, we have had enormous, enormous progress in Russia in human rights compared to what it was 25 years ago. And by ignoring that and by focusing totally on the shortcomings—and there are many shortcomings in the current Russia—we are not doing justice by Mr. Lantos or anybody else. The bottom line is, we should be siding with those people who are struggling for democracy, but not ignoring the fact that today the churches are filled in Russia.

And Dr. Cohen, I don't know where you were, but I have been in Russia and have been shown, just walked right down the street and said, here are several publications that are being sold right

here that are anti-Medvedev and Putin. Those things would have never happened under the old Russia, never.

And let us also note, China is the world's worst human rights abuser and the comparison of how we treat China economically as compared to Russia, there is just no comparison. We are bending over backwards to send all sorts of investment into China and to strengthen them while they have no reform, no human rights reform. And in Russia where they have at least had a lot of progress and that, we still keep them under the grips of Jackson-Vanik and other restrictions that were put on the Cold War. This is ridiculous. And I would hope that we understand they have future progress with Russia, but we need to treat it I think a little more honestly. So that is all I needed to say. Thank you very much.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Rivera. Thank you, Mr. Rohrabacher. Mr. Meeks, the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia, is recognized.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you. I just want to note for the record that I agree with Mr. Rohrabacher.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. The Earth is shaking.

Mr. MEEKS. Let me just ask real quick because some of—I guess the reason we are here is asking whether or not the administration is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction. So I will ask each panelist first, what are your thoughts? Should we pause reset or continue with reset?

Ms. SWETT. I would not so much suggest pausing reset as supplementing reset with a more vigorous and outspoken human rights dimension to our policy vis-à-vis Russia, and I think, Congressman Rohrabacher, the reason there is such a heightened level of concern about the human rights situation in Russia is because it has been moving decidedly in the wrong direction. I agree with you. China's situation is more abusive, is more troubling. But what is always disturbing is to see when you lose ground.

Mr. MEEKS. Let me go on. I don't want to lose my time.

Ms. SWETT. Yes, sir. Sorry.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you. I think this is the time for reassessment. The reset policy was applied for about 2½ years. We are at a good midpoint. We need to reassess. For example, on Syria, Russia still insists on selling arms to Syria. On Iran, Russia is pushing back. Even on the U.S. unilateral sanctions that we are sovereign to do, there is Russian pushback.

Mr. MEEKS. So should we pause reset or should we continue it?

Mr. COHEN. We should pause and reassess. Not just pause. We have to rethink it, sir.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Ambassador.

Mr. SESTANOVICH. Well, the reset policy has included an awareness of the kinds of difficulties that Dr. Cohen mentioned, and has tried to keep them in perspective while seeking cooperation that will serve our interests. And that seems like an approach that is worth continuing, although I would note that to go forward in the next step of the reset that the administration cares about most, which is WTO, Jackson-Vanik graduation, I think it will need to think harder and the Congress will need to think harder about how to come up with a modernized approach to democracy and human rights in Russia.

Mr. MEEKS. You are headed toward what my next question was. And I guess I will go to Dr. Cohen real quick, because the opposition and a lot of the human rights groups seem to be in favor of continuing reset. So I am wondering if we pause reset, then who really would be the beneficiaries and what would happen on the ground when you see individuals who are most affected by what has taken place saying, reset is a good thing? What would happen if we did pause, who would be the beneficiaries?

Mr. COHEN. Sir, I am a native Russian speaker. I read what the opposition says in the original, and I talk to them personally, and I know a lot of these people. I pretty much know all of the leaders of the opposition. It is my impression that the opposition is very critical of the human rights, rule of law and property rights protection aspects of the reset.

For example, we have a commission that is co-chaired by Dr. McFall, the Ambassador-designate, and Vladislav Surkov, the architect of the current Russian political system. The opposition is very critical that this commission is not making its voice heard on those abuses of human rights. They are doing everything, from assisting pregnant mothers to other things that have very little to do with the opposition. I would argue this administration subverted their original agenda of our concern about human rights in Russia.

Mr. MEEKS. Dr. Swett.

Ms. SWETT. Well, I think that I experienced the same thing when I met with human rights leaders in Russia in December. And that is what the current Russian Government would like to do, would be to focus on sort of, if you will, the feel-good aspects of human rights—social assistance and things like that—but that there is an increasingly hostile and difficult climate when it comes to securing the architecture of rule of law, the architecture of——

Mr. MEEKS. Let me ask because I only have 20 seconds left. Just asking, should Russia get into the WTO? Yes or no? I only have 14 seconds. Yes or no, Dr. Swett?

Ms. SWETT. Well, I think that—I am not going to give you a yes or no answer on that because I do not consider myself an expert on that issue. But I think we need to proceed with caution on Jackson-Vanik.

Mr. MEEKS. Ambassador, yes or no?

Mr. SESTANOVICH. If they meet the usual commercial terms.

Mr. MEEKS. Dr. Cohen?

Mr. COHEN. Not yet, but eventually, when they meet the usual criteria.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Bilirakis, our Florida colleague.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I appreciate it. I am not sure if this issue has been addressed, but I was wondering what the panelists think about any potential conflict that could arise over the claims of the Arctic sovereignty. As we know, natural resources are abundant in the Arctic and there has been a concern that Russia is trying to exercise exclusive control over this area. While we currently are in a state of peace with regard to the Arctic, do any of you believe there will be a future so-called Cold War when it comes to sharing the Arctic?

Mr. SESTANOVICH. I am sure there will be competition over resources, but I am not an expert on this issue.

Mr. COHEN. The Russian claims for 4 million square miles in the Arctic are spurious. They did not succeed to prove these claims, in the U.N. Tribunal under the Law of the Sea Treaty, but I think that the military competition is avoidable. I think we have the Arctic Council that the Russians are a party of.

We do not have enough resources currently. We don't have the icebreakers, we don't have the military capabilities to seriously protect our rights and our territorial waters and resources in Russia.

But yes, Russia does have Arctic policy and Arctic claims, and it is a huge priority for them, because they own huge amounts of oil and gas, in particular, in their exclusive economic zone and possibly beyond.

Ms. SWETT. It is not an area of my expertise, but one certainly gets the impression that—to use a basketball metaphor—they are trying to box out there.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. I yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much. Mr. Connolly of Virginia is recognized.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Ambassador Sestanovich—and I welcome comments from the other panelists as well. In the West, there is lots of speculation about whether there really is this sort of a byplay between Prime Minister Putin and President Medvedev or is it just sort of for show, more of a good cop/bad cop routine but actually beneath the surface nothing changes?

And I guess I would ask two questions about that. One is, do you think that the differences between the two are real and perhaps, over time, telling? And secondly and aside from that, were there the course of democratic institution building, it seems to me that in the last decade or so, we are seeing enormous retrogression—you know, the appointment of governors rather than the election of governors, the suppression of political parties, the suppression of the media. It sort of starts to look like the old Russia, not only in the Soviet times, but even in the czarist times, the lack of free expression and free institution.

So I have every reason to be hopeful that over time we are making progress, or is that just American naiveté that doesn't really take into account the situation on the ground?

Mr. SESTANOVICH. There is no doubt that Putin picked Medvedev because he thought he was the most controllable President he could imagine, and there is no doubt that since Medvedev became President, Putin has remained the dominant political figure in Russia.

But I think it is wrong to say that beneath this—to use your words—beneath the surface, nothing changes. The area is more political ferment, more political debate, more questioning of precisely the institutional arrangements that you have talked about in Russia 3 years ago, 6 years ago, 9 years ago. And while we shouldn't be naive about where that can go, it is to me significant that as many Russian political figures that speak on this subject have talked about the need for more political competition. Polls show that the Russian people want more political competition. So something is happening, even below the surface and on the surface, and we need to watch it carefully.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Dr. Cohen.

Mr. COHEN. Medvedev and Putin publicly disagree on a number of very important issues, both symbolic, and on issues directly relevant to American national interests. For example, as I am saying in my testimony, Putin is consistently criticizing the U.S., he accuses us of fomenting the descent and revolution in the Middle East. He accuses us of using social media such as Facebook, et cetera. He recognizes the legacy of Joseph Stalin, calling him an effective manager. He called the collapse of the Soviet Union the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century. And Medvedev responded and said, "No, the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century for Russia was the October Bolshevik putsch." This is highly symbolic.

Medvedev is much more outspoken on human rights and the rule-of-law issues. He recognizes the corruption, including corruption in courts. This is a real ideological competition. But as a politician, you recognize that if one side has the political power and the other side is very weak politically, as is the case, unfortunately, for Mr. Medvedev, it is no contest. And even if—which I think these chances are declining—even if Medvedev is going to be renominated and then formally elected as the next President of Russia, the deal with Putin is going to be, Putin is the boss and Medvedev is—excuse my French—the Queen of England.

Now, I think at the end of the day it is not going to happen. I think Putin is going to be the President of Russia with full powers, but I don't have my crystal ball with me here today, and I will not bet money on that. Thank you.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Connolly, I want to ask—you had 7 seconds left—but Mr. Deutch is needed for a Judiciary vote and so is Mr. Berman. So could I steal those 7 seconds from you?

Mr. CONNOLLY. Absolutely, Madam Chairman. And I apologize to Dr. Swett for the fact that she does not have time to respond. Perhaps at the end of the hearing we will allow her to.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much. Mr. Deutch is recognized.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Madam Chair. I would also like to say to Dr. Swett and Mrs. Lantos, I would like to particularly acknowledge Tom Lantos' fight for Soviet Jewry. I spent last Friday evening in a synagogue in Moscow, something that would have been awfully hard to imagine some 20 years ago. And I just wanted to acknowledge his leadership in that struggle.

Ambassador Sestanovich, I spent much of last week while in Russia talking about accession to the WTO with various members of the Russian Government. In particular, I spoke at length with the Minister of Economic Development, who happens to be here this week on that issue. And it is clear that WTO membership is a priority for the Russians and for the United States. But casting a shadow over this whole process is the Russian occupation of 20 percent of our strategic ally, Georgia. There is a fundamental disagreement between the United States and Russia, and between Russia and the rest of the international community for that matter, on Georgia's territorial integrity. And any resolution to Georgia's wish to have their customs agents on its borders, should accession be completed, could actually have a significant impact on deciding

where those borders ultimately lie, where they are recognized internationally. Can you speak to how you see this playing out?

Mr. SESTANOVICH. It is hard to be hopeful that there will be a compromise on the issue, because for all the parties there are rather fundamental issues involved, and for Georgia in particular. It is hard to put pressure on the Georgians to yield on an issue that involves its sovereignty, where there is a military occupation of two of its provinces. Both the Russians and the Georgians seem pretty dug in here, and the United States has said that they do not want to mediate the discussion—that it has to be resolved between Moscow and Tbilisi.

There are formulas that are being addressed that do involve compromise, but I can't say that from what I have heard they are particularly promising ones. The discussions, however, continue. I don't think either Russia or Georgia or the United States is prepared to let this issue derail, a goal that all of them in some way share. So, I can't help you.

Mr. DEUTCH. Doesn't there have to be some resolution, at least as to these borders issues, in advance of WTO accession?

Mr. SESTANOVICH. Well, there needs to be a Russian withdrawal from Georgian territory. But that is a broader and long-term problem. The question is, is there a small fix, a small step forward that will make WTO accession easier? And I don't know the answer to that.

Mr. DEUTCH. Dr. Cohen, in the meetings there were some statements made alluding to the long-term—having to wait to see the long-term economic viability of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. It wasn't clear whether that suggestion meant that ultimately if they weren't economically viable the Russians might ultimately withdraw, or if they weren't economically viable that the Russians might ultimately try to incorporate them into Russia. Do you have thoughts on that?

Mr. COHEN. An excellent nuanced question, sir. I would say that Russia definitely recognizes that South Ossetia is not economically viable, is depopulated, it is heavily subsidized, it is run by former KGB and Communist Party ethnic Russians. As far as Abkhazia, it may or may not be economically viable. The coastline is so gorgeous, the Russians will never give it up as long as they can. And I think you are putting your finger on something absolutely vital. And that is that both the United States and our European allies should be doing more to support territorial integrity of Georgia; and also our Government that, as a part of the reset, is not providing sales of defensive arms to Georgia. Maybe as a part of a reset rethink that I am advocating, we should look at that again, because why is it that we are denying Georgia defensive arms?

The Secretary of State while visiting there says, it is democracy that will make you safe. Senior State Department officials say, "Georgia is oversecuritizing" the South Caucasus issues. And in the meantime, we have four military bases of Russia in Abkhazia, in South Ossetia. We have the extension of a huge base in Armenia called Gyumri until 2044. The one who is securitizing South Caucasus is Russia.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Deutch. And Mr. Marino is recognized from Pennsylvania.

Mr. MARINO. I thank the chairwoman. Good morning. So far it is good morning.

I don't know if my colleague and friend, Mr. Deutch, prefaced his statements and questions, but we both just got back from Russia. And four points that I would like to bring out—and I would like each of you to respond, knowing that we only have 5 minutes.

First of all, it was very clear when we visited Moscow and sat down with Duma members, simply saying that—and the one individual, I think he was a part of the Socialist Party that formed a larger majority, simply stated that as long as the existing President of Georgia is not only in that position, but has any influence, Russia does not want to have any communications whatsoever and there are no deals on the table. So it is a personal issue that it appeared to me, or at least I inferred from the comments.

The second issue, the same member of the Duma stated that—well, tried to chastise us a little bit, that why are we picking on Iran, because we thought Iran was a very friendly country. What are we doing in Afghanistan, et cetera. I politely said to him, I will take you to task on that when we have the time. They chose to have no response, but then turned around to say that not only the world but Russia is looking at the United States to get its economic affairs in order because we have an impact on the international economy, and we still should be able to help Russia. Now, criticizing us and then turn around and say, we need your money.

The next issue is that the Russians have an ability to politely—politely agree with an issue that we raised, and then history has proven over the years that they do nothing about it. In fact, they almost ignore it.

And the last issue is the corruption taking place in Russia, and the emphasis was put on the wealth that Putin has accumulated so rapidly, the wealth to the extent—from several individuals saying he is probably one, if not the richest man in the world.

Would you care to address those issues and comment on those, please, Doctor?

Ms. SWETT. Well, on the question of it being personal vis-à-vis the President of Georgia, I think that there are a lot of decisions in Russia that are based on personal animus and animosity. And certainly the case of Mikhail Khodorkovsky is a classic example of that, where Putin has viewed Mikhail Khodorkovsky, now Russia's most prominent political prisoner, as a direct threat to his power. So they have thrown aside all semblance of rule of law in the continued and excessive pursuit of this individual. So I think that that kind of personal politics is very prevalent there.

On the issue of corruption, it is rampant. It is sometimes called vertical corruption. It is taking place at every level. And it represents a kind of plundering of the Russian people by the Russian bureaucracy. And it is one of I think the most severe issues holding back any sort of hopeful future for the Russian people until this rampant inbred corruption by the governmental bureaucracy is brought under control.

And maybe I will leave some of the other issues to my colleagues because I know time is short.

Mr. MARINO. Dr. Cohen.

Mr. COHEN. I couldn't agree more on Saakashvili, but also countries have interest. And I would submit to you that it is not in the Russian interest to have this chronic long-term irritant, which is occupation of Georgia. They need to think how to resolve it, Saakashvili or no Saakashvili. A lot of people don't like each other and don't get along.

Ahmadinejad, the President of Iran, is a revolting individual and nevertheless the Obama administration reached out to him. Well, it didn't work. But what I am saying is, you have to get over it and deal with the issues. On Iran, I think many Russians don't recognize that Iran having the medium-range ballistic missiles, especially if they are tipped with nuclear weapons, not just with technology from Russia—North Korea, China, Pakistan, all play a role in building the Iranian nuclear power—this is going to be a threat to Russia. It will take 5 minutes for such a missile to reach Moscow or any other Russian city.

And finally on corruption, yes, it is systemic. Yes, it is getting worse. Yes, President Medvedev spent a tremendous amount of time talking about it, with no visible results for now. And as Dr. Swett mentioned, Khodorkovsky and his company Yukos, Yukos was expropriated by the state. Its assets were put in the possession of a state-owned oil company called Rosneft, and it was done in a corrupt way, in a corrupt fashion, and people benefited from that.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much. And thank you, Mr. Marino. I would like to recognize Mr. Connolly before I recognize Mr. Engel. Mr. Connolly had asked a question of the panelists and we wanted to get Dr. Swett's answer to it. Do you remember or you could reframe it?

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Madam Chairman. My question was sort of twofold. One was, what is your take on the ostensible differences between Medvedev and Putin; and then, secondly, even aside from that, are we seeing a healthy evolution, however slow, in democratic institution building and democratic aspirations? Because it would seem that over the last decade or so, we have actually seen retrogression.

Ms. SWETT. Well, I would agree with your last point. I don't think we are seeing healthy development. It is going in the opposite direction. But as it relates to the issue of the interrelationship between Putin and Medvedev, President Medvedev has spoken clearly. In fact, one of the first things he said upon assuming the Presidency was that he wanted to combat the legalism nihilism—and those are his words—that characterized Russia. And many people are watching this second trial of Khodorkovsky and Lebedev because it is the ultimate example of legal nihilism.

As Dr. Cohen said, legal experts across the spectrum and across the globe acknowledge that it is an absurd Kafkaesque trial in every sense where they are now being sort of convicted for charges that are absolutely inconsistent with the facts on which they were initially convicted 8 years earlier. And I think the outcome of that case, the fact that basically it was an example of telephone justice, that from Mr. Putin came the telephone call to the judge ordering the outcome that he desired. I don't think there is any doubt about that. The judge expelled reporters from the courtroom when he

read the verdict, because I think his own shame and sense of guilt at being a party to this was so great that he didn't want all those witnesses there as he read the verdict.

So certainly the outcome of the Khodorkovsky case is emblematic of the fact that in this conflict between Medvedev—more of a reformer, somebody who has a law background himself—and Putin, Putin clearly was triumphant.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Madam Chairman, I want to thank you.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Connolly. Thank you, Dr. Swett.

Mr. Engel, the ranking member on the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, is now recognized.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Madam Chair. I wanted to ask any of the panelists if they care to comment—since I chaired the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee for a number of years and am now the ranking member—of Russia's intent in Latin America. That is something that is sort of under the radar screen. We know, for instance, that Iran, sitting down with Hugo Chavez, has tried to infiltrate a number of places in Latin America.

I am wondering if any of you would care to comment on what you see as Russia trying to do, because I am a believer that if the United States doesn't engage the way we should, then we have Russia and China and certainly the likes of Chavez and his people moving into the void.

So, Dr. Cohen.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Engel, first let me thank you for everything you are doing on foreign policy. I am a great admirer.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. COHEN. Russia has a special relationship with Hugo Chavez. Mr. Sechin, a Putin confidante, a Spanish speaker and Portuguese speaker and deputy prime minister in charge of, among other things, oil and gas, is in charge of the Venezuela dossier. Russia promised, in a very dangerous way, I think, to build a nuclear reactor in Venezuela. If they do that—this is the trajectory that started with Iran, with Bushehr—and under the guise of building a civilian nuclear reactor—you can train nuclear engineers, you can train physicists, and you can launch, God forbid, a Venezuelan Chavista nuclear weapons program. And of course this is not something you would like to have.

Moreover, Russia is selling sophisticated weapons, but also less sophisticated weapons that should be a cause for concern of this administration. And maybe I missed something, but I haven't heard that concern really expressed by this administration. I am specifically talking about the Kalashnikov assault rifle factory in Venezuela. Now, Venezuela can arm 500,000 people with Kalashnikov, and people in this town pooh-poohed it. But there is nothing to pooh-pooh if it comes to support of FARC and the threat to Colombia.

Finally, let's note the Russian efforts at soft power. Russia Today is an anti-American television channel. It has not only a massive presence in Washington, DC, it has American broadcasting, Arabic broadcasting and, importantly, Spanish broadcasting. Russia Today is broadcasting in this country in Spanish and is broadcasting in

Latin America. So it is the combination of hard power and energy. The Russians managed to push out Western oil companies from Venezuela and get, in their stead, to develop very lucrative Venezuelan oil resources, and soft power, such as Russia Today, in combination, should be taken seriously. Thank you.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Dr. Cohen. I appreciate your testimony. Thank you for your comment.

I don't know if Israel had been discussed before I came, but I wanted to mention that. What kind of a role, if any, destructive role or positive role, is Russia playing in the Middle East today, particularly with the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians?

Mr. SESTANOVICH. Russia, as you know, is a member of the quartet. They tend to be one of the less active members of the quartet and to shape their agenda in relation to the others—the lead taken by others. There have been some exceptions to that. Periodically, Russia tries to make itself a mediator between Hamas and other governments, but not a great deal has come of those efforts.

Mr. ENGEL. How about Russian attempts to, what I think, is to trivialize the fact that under the quartet, the Palestinians are supposed to renounce terror and, of course, Hamas has done anything but?

Mr. SESTANOVICH. Yes. The encouragement of Hamas and the opening of the channel to Hamas has definitely carried that implication. What the exact communications with Hamas have been, I don't know.

Mr. ENGEL. Yes, Dr. Cohen.

Mr. COHEN. Real brief. Despite the fact that Hamas is recognized as a terrorist organization by both the United States and the European Union, the Russians are treating them as a legitimate organization. And this is despite the fact that Hamas' charter states that its goal is not just to destroy the State of Israel, but to engage in violent acts against Jews anywhere they can be found.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. ENGEL. Can I just ask one quick thing? I know it is near and dear to your heart, Madam Chair. I don't know if there was discussion about the Russian connection to the Castro regime in Cuba.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. For that, I may give you additional time. But let's go to Ms. Schmidt, in order to be fair. Thank you, Mr. Engel. Mrs. Schmidt of Ohio is recognized.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Thank you. First off, I am delighted to see the family of a very good colleague of mine in the audience today. Mrs. Lantos, it is so nice to see you. And Dr. Swett, you look just like your father. I don't think there is any DNA test needed for you.

I am going to continue with Congressman Engel's question on the relationship between Castro and Putin. And I will let all of you answer that.

Mr. COHEN. There is a residual relationship that comes from the Soviet era. My understanding is that there is direction, or directive from above, to improve, encourage, and intensify the relationship between Russia and Cuba, but nothing on the level of the old Soviet support and subsidy, the multibillion-dollar subsidy, and the spying facility. Although I heard—I didn't look into that that

much—a spying facility was transferred from the Russian tutelage to the Chinese tutelage. But I would need to look more into that.

Mr. SESTANOVICH. If you can't pay for weapons or nuclear power plants or other Russian exports, you are not really interesting to the Russians. There is a tiny bit of residual tail-pulling value for Cuba in Russian policy, but it is pretty minor. The Russians are more interested in Brazil as a member of the BRICs, or of Venezuela because it is an energy exporter and generally irresponsible player in the hemisphere. Those countries offer more fun and profit for Russia. Castro seems very much yesterday's man by comparison.

Ms. SWETT. I would agree with that. But I think it is nonetheless instructive and illuminating that the Castro regime remains an oppressive, autocratic, antidemocratic regime and Russia supports them. I think that is something worth noting.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Thank you. And the Obama administration said that the New START agreement with Russia does not undermine U.S. missile defense plans. And the Russian Government has repeatedly stated that in fact the treaty is predicated in a way that—on that very thing, and that it will not honor the agreement with the U.S. missile defense plans if the U.S. missile defense plans proceed. So who is correct, Obama or Putin?

Mr. SESTANOVICH. The Russians have backed themselves into a corner here. I predict they will be able to get out of it. But they have taken a rather absolutist position that the administration—that no U.S. administration is going to support. It is an absolute red line in American policy that you are not going to yield on missile defense just to please the Russians. The Russians, I believe, are getting that message. They have got it loud and clear from NATO this week.

Mr. COHEN. I think that the concessions were made, and we recognize the nexus between defensive and offensive weapons. That was opening the gate for the Russian claims. We in this way facilitate the Russian claims. We are engaging in negotiations on missile defense. And unlike what Congressman Rohrabacher said before—unfortunately, he is not here—that this missile defense in some way is threatening the massive Russian strategic ballistic missile arsenal, that is just not the case. These missiles in Europe are aimed at the Iranian threat. It is a very small deployment. They can intercept a small number of warheads. Russians have thousands of warheads.

So what they are doing is posturing in an attempt to gain a say in an area that we thought that they are out of, which is Central Europe. What the Poles do, what the Czechs do, as members of NATO, is no Russian business, especially when this deployment does not threaten Russia.

Mr. SESTANOVICH. My question on this is always, how is it working out? No one agrees with the Russian position.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Thank you very much. I yield back my time.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Mr. Sherman, the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade.

Mr. SHERMAN. It is great to have you here. We all admired your father and many of us look forward to the day when you are on this side of the room.

Ms. SWETT. Thank you so much.

Mr. SHERMAN. The easiest thing for us to do in this room is to say that all of the tension between the United States and Russia is Russia's fault, that we are blameless, that our policies are logical.

I think there is enough blame to go around; that we can give Russia its fair share and still assume a little bit for ourselves. Now, one of the great philosophical debates in foreign policy is territorial integrity versus self-determination, the two great wars of America's history, our Revolutionary War for our self-determination and the Civil War to retain our territorial integrity and prevent the so-called self-determination of the southern States.

We see this tension in areas much closer to Russia. We supported the independence of Georgia, Moldova, and all the Soviet Socialist republics. We supported the independence of Bosnia and Croatia, and even of the Kosovo province of the Republic of Serbia. We opposed the independence of the northern part of Kosovo that wanted to break away and rejoin Serbia. We opposed the independence of Trans-Dniester, Moldova. We opposed the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Now we seem to be on both sides of this issue. It seems like there is no logic in this issue. It seems like there is no logic in our position. There is logic. There is consistency. We are absolutely, insistently, anti-Russian on a host of issues very important to them and seemingly philosophically schizoid for us.

My first question, Ambassador, is, other than things that are in the economic interest of Russia and/or feathering the economic interests of particular elements of the leadership team, what does Russia want from the United States?

Mr. SESTANOVICH. Congressman, I have to comment on your point about consistent anti-Russian policy on the issue of territorial integrity. The issue of territorial integrity that has mattered most to Russia in the past 20 years has been Chechnya. And the United States has never in any way questioned that territorial integrity. We have objected to the way in which Russia repressed the Chechen people and brutally——

Mr. SHERMAN. I will ask you to respond back.

Mr. SESTANOVICH. But on that issue there has been——

Mr. SHERMAN. Yes. We haven't totally called for the dismemberment of the Russian Federation. Aside from that—well, you can answer my question.

Mr. SESTANOVICH. Yes. I think that Russia has a desire to have its great power status respected, its status as a nuclear superpower respected, its growing position as an energy power advanced through cooperation, and sometimes not cooperation, with other consuming countries.

Mr. SHERMAN. If I can, the Russians have made the most difficult national psychological change ever from superpower to nonsuperpower. The Germans tried to make that change, having lost World War I, just as Russia lost the Cold War. They were unsuc-

cessful in making that psychological adjustment until the Second World War.

Have we done everything possible to assuage Russia to make sure that it is being treated with proper respect, or has the Cold War mentality in the United States led to gratuitous acts of humiliation?

Mr. SESTANOVICH. I think that every administration since the end of the Cold War has tried to find a way of according Russia respect without giving Russia veto over issues where we want to pursue our interests. And as with territorial integrity and self-determination, that is sometimes a hard balance to strike. I would say most of the administrations have gotten it pretty much right. But on the receiving end for the Russians, the feeling is always we don't get enough deference.

Mr. SHERMAN. I hope we do a second round so I have a chance to get the opinions of the other two witnesses, and I regret that I only had 5 minutes. I yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much. Unfortunately, we will not have a second round. We will be voting pretty soon. But I want to thank the wonderful panelists. And thank you to all the members for terrific questions. And thank you to the visitors who joined us. And the committee is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Hearing Record

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515-0128

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Chairman

July 5, 2011

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held in **Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live, via the WEBCAST link on the Committee website at http://www.hcfa.house.gov):**

DATE: Thursday, July 7, 2011

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

SUBJECT: Time to Pause the Reset? Defending U.S. Interests in the Face of Russian Aggression

WITNESSES: Katrina Lantos Swett, Ph.D.
President
Lantos Foundation for Human Rights

Mr. Ariel Cohen
Senior Research Fellow
Russian Eurasian Studies and International Energy Policy
The Heritage Foundation

The Honorable Steve Sestanovich
George F. Kennan Senior Fellow for Russian and Eurasian Studies
Council on Foreign Relations

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day *Thursday* **Date** *July 7, 2011* **Room** *2172 Rayburn*

Starting Time *10:05 am* **Ending Time** *12:02 pm*

Recesses [ ] (to) (to) (to) (to) (to) (to)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session [✓]
Executive (closed) Session [ ]
Televised [✓]
Electronically Recorded (taped) [✓]
Stenographic Record [✓]

TITLE OF HEARING:

Time to Pause the Reset? Defending U.S. Interests in the Face of Russian Aggression

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Attendence Attached

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes [✓] **No** [ ]
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

Rep. Smith SFR
Rep. Connolly SFR

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *12:02 pm*

Jean Carroll, Director of Committee Operations

Hearing/Briefing Title: Time to Pause the Reset? Defending U.S. Interests in the Face of Russian Aggression

Date: July 7, 2011

Present	Member
X	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, FL
X	Christopher Smith, NJ
X	Dan Burton, IN
	Elton Gallegly, CA
X	Dana Rohrabacher, CA
	Donald Manzullo, IL
X	Edward R. Royce, CA
X	Steve Chabot, OH
	Ron Paul, TX
	Mike Pence, IN
	Joe Wilson, SC
	Connie Mack, FL
	Jeff Fortenberry, NE
	Michael McCaul, TX
	Ted Poe, TX
X	Gus M. Bilirakis, FL
X	Jean Schmidt, OH
	Bill Johnson, OH
X	David Rivera, FL
	Mike Kelly, PA
	Tim Griffin, AK
X	Tom Marino, PA
	Jeff Duncan, SC
X	Ann Marie Buerkle, NY
	Renee Ellmers, NC

Present	Member
X	Howard L. Berman, CA
	Gary L. Ackerman, NY
X	Eni F.H. Faleomavaega, AS
	Donald M. Payne, NJ
X	Brad Sherman, CA
X	Eliot Engel, NY
X	Gregory Meeks, NY
	Russ Carnahan, MO
	Albio Sires, NJ
X	Gerry Connolly, VA
X	Ted Deutch, FL
	Dennis Cardoza, CA
X	Ben Chandler, KY
X	Brian Higgins, NY
	Allyson Schwartz, PA
	Chris Murphy, CT
	Frederica Wilson, FL
	Karen Bass, CA
	William Keating, MA
X	David Cicilline, RI

"Time to Pause the Reset?: Defending U.S. Interests in the Face of Russian Aggression"

House Committee on Foreign Affairs

Rep. Chris Smith

July 7, 2011

Thank you Madam Chairman and those joining us today.

The reality is that Russia has a dismal human rights record, thanks to a decade of Vladimir Putin's self-styled "managed democracy" that has more to do with control than freedom.

While some have been fixated with the pursuit of arms control and other agreements with Moscow, the human rights situation on the ground in Russia has deteriorated across the board. In category after category we have witnessed the conditions going from bad to worse. Whether we are speaking about freedom of expression and the media; the rights of all believers to freely profess and practice their faith; or the ability of human rights defenders, NGOs, independent journalists and political parties to operate without fear of government harassment, the space for such activity has steadily shrunk. The absence of an independent judiciary and meaningful checks and balances on executive power has contributed to this reality.

Illustrative is the tragic case of Sergey Magnitsky, a courageous young whistleblower who exposed massive fraud on the part of mid-level government officials and died a torturous death in custody for his uncompromising commitment to the truth. Instead of holding those responsible for his death to account, several of the ringleaders involved actually received awards and

promotions from their superiors. The well documented circumstances surrounding Magnitsky's detention and death as well as the subsequent developments in his case provide a glimpse into the nature the realities of today's Russia, one that shows utter contempt for the dignity of the individual.

In many respects one is left with the strong impression that Russia resembles a criminal enterprise masquerading as a normal government and actor on the international scene. From the crooked cop looking for the next shakedown on the streets of Moscow to the very pinnacle of power, endemic corruption has taken hold at every level. Pronouncements by Russia's leadership regarding corruption ring hollow in the absence of meaningful action.

Madam Chairman, I have found that the American people can be moved when they see the human face of rights violations. The face of Sergey Magnitsky is emblematic of what is terribly wrong in Russia. I firmly believe that the way a government treats its own people is indicative of its reliability as a responsible partner. In this regard, the current state of affairs in Russia should give us pause for profound concern.

Instead of featuring prominently on the Administration's bilateral agenda, human rights clearly take a back seat to other considerations. At times one is left with the strong impression that preserving "reset" itself has become the priority for Washington. Ultimately, turning a blind eye to Russia's brazen violations of human rights and democratic principles will further embolden a repressive Russian regime determined to quash dissent at home while coddling dictators around the globe from Central Asia and Syria to Cuba and Venezuela.

Ronald Reagan once observed "We have learned the first objective of the adversaries of freedom is to make free nations question their own faith in freedom,

to make us think that adhering to our principles and speaking out against human rights abuses or foreign aggression is somehow an act of belligerence."

We would do well to be guided by such wisdom as we seek to build a relationship with Russia that serves U.S. interests while preserving our principles and values.

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly (VA-11)

HCFA Full Committee Hearing: Time To Pause the Reset? Defending U.S. Interests in the Face of Russian Aggression
Thursday, July 7, 2011
10am

One would be hard-pressed to find an independent observer that could claim that Russia is a bastion of freedom, openness, and democracy. High profile cases that attracted international attention include the trial of oil magnate Mikhail Khodorkovsky and the suspicious death of attorney Sergey Magnitsky. Both examples are widely accepted as instances of Russian authorities' abuse of the system in retaliation against those who threatened the power structure in Moscow. Certainly, political openness leaves something to be desired—just last month, for example, Russian authorities refused to register the Popular Freedom Party. But the title of this hearing indicates a looming, nefarious Russian intent that directly violates U.S. interests. In order to assess the veracity of this assessment, the bilateral relationship ought to be considered without relying so heavily on the Cold War model of the past.

There has been ample criticism of President Obama for negotiating the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), which the Senate ratified at the end of the 111th Congress. But President Obama's actions follow a long-established precedent for the United States' leadership on nuclear cooperation. The Reagan Administration outlined negotiating positions to address intermediate-range missiles, long-range strategic weapons, and ballistic missile defenses. During his second term in 1987, President Reagan signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), which eliminated all nuclear-armed ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 300 and 3,400 miles and their infrastructure.

The momentum continued with President George H.W. Bush, who continued to pursue the first Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), which the U.S. and Soviet Union signed in 1991. In order for the United States to have credibility and authority on international nuclear issues, continued engagement and cooperation are necessary. Therefore, the assessment of one of today's witnesses that New START is "a cornerstone of President Obama's dangerously naïve policy of unilateral disarmament" is over the top.[1] In fact, the Administration's implementation of tough sanctions on Iran would indicate the opposite.

Analysts rightfully point out the power that Russia wields with its massive natural oil reserves. In 2009, in a demonstration of its energy muscle, Russia withheld energy supplies from Ukraine over financial and pipeline issues. U.S. dependence on foreign energy sources has long been a cause for concern, which is why exploring alternative energy and establishing a domestic base for such energy is important.

The energy issue is one of many that color the U.S.-Russia relationship. The future of the relationship ought not to be skewed by the Cold War era of the past. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

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[1] Ariel Cohen, Ph.D., *The Heritage Foundation*, "Testimony before House Foreign Affairs Committee," July 7, 2011.

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