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THE U.S. SECURITY RELATIONSHIP WITH RUSSIA AND ITS IMPACT ON TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

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JULY 30, 2009

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THE U.S. SECURITY RELATIONSHIP WITH RUSSIA AND ITS IMPACT ON TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Thursday, July 30, 2009.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:07 a.m., in room HVC–210, Capitol Building, Hon. Ike Skelton (chairman of the committee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. IKE SKELTON, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM MISSOURI, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. Good morning. This is the first hearing we are having in these temporary quarters. And when our quarters back in the Rayburn Building get completed, they are going to look very much like this. And I hope you enjoy the trappings that we have.

We welcome you to this hearing on "The U.S. Security Relationship with Russia and Its Impact on Transatlantic Security."

Appearing before us today, the Honorable Alexander Vershbow, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security, U.S. Department of Defense; our friend, Admiral James Winnefeld, United States Navy, Director of Strategic Plans and Policy of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—good to see you again, sir; the Honorable Philip Gordon, Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, Department of State.

Even though we are learning the scope of today's hearing on Russia to security issues, it still presents us with a range of topics as broad as that country is wide. Once the heart of a superpower, and today a power still to be reckoned with, Russia plays a major role in multiple, overlapping issues that have impact throughout the globe.

Still, as big as it is, physically and metaphorically, it has been a while since Russia has dominated our thinking in regard to security issues. We have had an ongoing dialogue over matters of nonproliferation with them, of course. And I am pleased that President Obama has undertaken the ambitious effort to strengthen and expand our nonproliferation cooperation with Russia. It is clear that progress is already being made in that arena.

In many matters, our two sets of national interests are intertwined. Both nations are concerned about extremist terrorism. Both nations are concerned about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Both nations are concerned about energy security.

There are many such areas that are ripe for our cooperation. The U.S.-Russia relationship remains important, and I am glad that President Obama has reinvigorated it.

In the last few years, Iraq and Afghanistan have been center stage, and we have grown accustomed to thinking of our security challenge—as well as our North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies—through that lens. But we need to look no further than the Georgia crisis of last summer to remind us that Russia also represents a significant challenge in our security landscape.

It is clear that Russia would like to define a sphere of influence in what it calls its "near abroad." And it is equally clear that it has made some of our NATO allies and other European friends quite nervous.

So, while NATO is performing an independent role in Afghanistan, we must not forget that it is first and foremost a regional security arrangement, and many of our allies count on it—and, therefore, us—as the guarantor of European stability.

In regards to arms control and nuclear security, President Obama has established an ambitious agenda that he has described eloquently in his April speech in the Czech Republic. I am glad to see the Administration is working hard with its Russian counterparts to complete a modest follow-on to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) that expires in December.

Even if a new treaty cannot be ratified by the December deadline, START should not be allowed to expire, because the data exchanges and other verification provisions in that treaty contribute significantly to strategic stability and is in our national interest.

Yet these initiatives in other areas of mutual cooperation could be stunted by disagreements over issues such as non-strategic nuclear weapons, and especially missile defenses. The Administration's ongoing review of missile defense requirements and how that fits in the larger framework of U.S. national security interests and striking that appropriate balance in U.S.-Russia and U.S.-NATO relations is a necessary though difficult task.

And with luck, the Administration can find ways to work with Russia on some of these and more difficult topics. But in the end, the United States must balance its desire to reset the relationship with Russia with a clear calculation of our own national interests and the risks and threats that we and our allies do face.

We must be careful to define these interests in the context of our overall national security strategy. At the end of today's hearing, it will be clear that Russia remains a critical influence on that strategy.

Now, let us turn to my friend, my colleague from California, the ranking member, Mr. McKeon.

STATEMENT OF HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. MCKEON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank you for agreeing to hold a hearing on this subject regarding the relationship with Russia and its relation on impact—its impact on transatlantic security.

Your testimony this morning gives our members an opportunity to understand the Administration's Russia reset policy and better appreciate the ongoing and evolving security challenges in Europe and Eurasia.

This committee last met in March to discuss Russia and NATO when we received testimony from General John Craddock, who was, until recently, Commander of European Command and Supreme Allied Commander. His testimony was insightful and came with much appreciated candor. General Craddock said that, after the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, there were no borders under threat of invasion in Europe and Eurasia.

General Craddock continued, stating he thought that assumption has been proven false. General Craddock assessed that Russia's intent may be to weaken European solidarity and systemically reduce U.S. influence.

As a result, since the Georgia conflict in August of 2008, European Command (EUCOM) has called for a re-evaluation of the strategic environment, which includes EUCOM's deliberative planning, a strategy for Russia and an evaluation of U.S. force presence in Europe.

That was the view of our top military commander back in March. Since that time, the Administration's Russia reset policy has taken shape.

While I want to make clear that I support engagement with Russia, I am concerned that a grand bargain with Russia may risk the viability of the security architecture that has kept the European continent peaceful for nearly 60 years. Russian misdeeds and provocations in the recent past, as well as their planned European security treaty, suggest that the Kremlin seeks to weaken NATO, marginalize U.S. influence in Europe and gain a veto over European security affairs.

This is why I support a NATO-first policy, which would make clear to our NATO allies that U.S. bilateral engagement with Russia will not foster collective insecurity among our allies.

I commend the Chairman for including in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) many of the provisions from the bipartisan NATO First bill sponsored by Mr. Turner and Mr. Marshall, which takes legislative steps to strengthen transatlantic security. These provisions, to name a few, cover the START Treaty, long-range missile defense in Europe, and U.S. force presence in Europe.

Vice President Biden's visit to Ukraine and Georgia last week was a step in the right direction. And his assessment that Russia used a pretext to invade Georgia demonstrated that the reset policy should not sugar-coat Russian behavior. Yet striking the balance of renewed engagement with Russia and supporting Central and Eastern European allies and partners is proving to be a challenge.

In a July 15th open letter to President Obama, written by 22 prominent Central and Eastern European figures, expressed deep concern among America's Central and Eastern European allies over the implications of improved relations between Russia and the U.S. on their security and the transatlantic relationship.

Following Vice President Biden's visit, Russia's envoy to NATO said that Russia considered the question of rearming Georgia more

serious than whether Georgia enters NATO. Secretary Clinton quickly affirmed that the Obama Administration considered Russia a great power, and remains committed to reset bilateral relations.

It is precisely this balancing act that played out in the headlines this week that I would like our witnesses to discuss today. How do we ensure that our bilateral agreements with Russia do not compromise our commitment to transatlantic security?

This leads me to a number of specific concerns. What kind of military-to-military relationship do we expect to have with Georgia and Ukraine? And will EUCOM continue its deliberative planning?

With respect to European missile defense, I would like to understand how the reset policy has affected NATO's support of European missile defense, in particular, the impact that it has had on Poland and the Czech Republic, as well as the Administration's missile defense review.

With respect to the START Treaty that many of us in the House have concerns about: how START may impact the nuclear triad, considering the announced reductions in strategic delivery vehicles to between 500 and 1,100; the Administration's Nuclear Posture Review, which frames the military's nuclear requirements; advanced conventional capabilities and space capabilities; enhancing the reliability, safety and security of our strategic nuclear forces and the needed modernization of our aging nuclear weapons complex; and finally, the large number of Russian tactical nuclear weapons deployed near Europe.

In addition to hearing your views on these specific concerns, I am interested in the Administration's views on the provisions in the House-passed NDAA that address these issues.

Finally, I hope your testimony today will cover the recommendations of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States. In particular, I am interested whether the Administration will adopt two of the commission's unanimous findings and recommendations: number one, that the United States must retain nuclear weapons until such time as the international environment may permit their elimination globally; and two, the United States must also continue to concern itself with issues of deterrence, assurance and stability in the nuclear relationship with Russia.

As you can see, there is a lot to cover today, and I look forward to your testimony and hope that the discussion we have today will give this Congress and the American people a better understanding of the U.S.-Russia security relationship.

Thank you very much. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman from California.

We will begin with Mr. Alexander Vershbow.

The Honorable Vershbow, please.

STATEMENT OF HON. ALEXANDER VERSHBOW, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Secretary VERSHBOW. Thank you, Chairman Skelton, Ranking Member McKeon, and other members of the committee.

I very much welcome this opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the U.S. relationship with Russia and its implications for transatlantic and U.S. security.

Russia has been a lifelong interest for me since I began studying the Russian language in high school in the 1960s. As a Foreign Service officer at what was then the Soviet desk in the 1980s, as U.S. ambassador to Russia from 2001 to 2005, and now as assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, I have learned that getting U.S.-Russian relations right is one of our highest priorities and one of our biggest challenges.

So, it is especially meaningful to report that recent developments in U.S.-Russian relations—and, most importantly, the Moscow summit that took place earlier this month—have created new opportunities for cooperation with Russia to enhance U.S. and European security.

We are now trying to build on this positive momentum to collaborate with Moscow in areas where our national interests coincide such as nonproliferation, arms control and bringing security and stability to Afghanistan.

Although we have pressed the reset button, this does not mean we will shy away from dealing with Russia on areas where we disagree such as Georgia or NATO enlargement. And we will in no way, reduce or compromise our commitment to the security of our NATO allies and also our allies in Asia and other parts of the world.

The challenge is to find a way not only to work cooperatively with Russia in areas where our interests coincide but also to continue to engage in the other more contentious areas without artificial linkages. It is on this basis that we seek to establish a more solid basis for a sustained engagement with Russia.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a few comments on major areas of common interest where we did make some progress at the summit and where we believe Russia can work with us as a contributor to our mutual security. I will also touch on a couple of issues where we still have important differences.

I have a longer statement that I would like to submit for the record. So I will keep my opening remarks brief.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

Secretary VERSHBOW. Thank you, sir.

The summit in Moscow was far more productive than we had expected. The mood was positive and the discussions were highly substantive, opening the way to some concrete agreements and understandings on a range of subjects.

Topping the list was Afghanistan, President Obama's highest priority. The Russians I think recognize that they, too, have a stake in defeating the Taliban and establishing a stable, democratic Afghanistan.

The most important deliverable was the signature of an agreement permitting the transit of troops and lethal material through Russian air space, up to 4,500 military flights and unlimited commercial flights each year which will diversify supply routes and significantly reduce transit times and fuel costs. We also are encouraged by Russian interest in expanding their involvement in other areas such as training the Afghan police.

Arms control was another area of progress. One of President Obama's primary goals was to reach a framework agreement for a new START Follow-on Treaty and under the joint understanding signed in Moscow, strategic delivery vehicles will be reduced to a range of 500 to 1,100 and their associated warheads to between 1,500 and 1,675. My colleagues, I think will say more about START.

Another major summit goal was to strengthen our cooperation with Russia on preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. And in this regard, Presidents Obama and Medvedev had lengthy discussions on how to deal with the immediate challenges posed by Iran and North Korea. They spent a lot of time on Iran in particular. And they agreed as well to broaden our bilateral cooperation to increase security of nuclear materials and facilities worldwide.

I think, taken together, the initiatives of the summit—on nuclear issues, the START follow-on and understandings on nuclear security—were an important step toward President Obama's goal of a world without nuclear weapons, and will strengthen U.S. and Russian leadership as we prepare for next year's review conference for the nonproliferation treaty.

Now, on missile defense, although it remains a very contentious issue, we were able to reach agreement on a joint statement, which includes a joint ballistic missile threat assessment, that will be focused primarily on Iran and North Korea. We have had a U.S. team in Moscow this week to begin the process. We also pledged to redouble efforts to open the long-planned Joint Data Exchange Center in Moscow.

We hope these modest steps will serve as the basis for more substantial cooperation, both bilaterally and in the NATO-Russia Framework, aimed at defending our nations against ballistic missile threats.

The Department of Defense (DOD) is, as you know, conducting—is taking a comprehensive look at plans for European missile defense as part of the wider ballistic missile defense review. The outcome on European missile defense will be determined by the threat from Iran, by the technical feasibility of different missile defense options and the cost. This is not a bargaining chip in our dealings with Moscow on Iran, or START, or on any other issue.

There are a lot of other subjects where I think we made some progress in resetting relations, including NATO-Russia cooperation, military-to-military contacts and European security architecture. My colleagues will say more about those. They are covered in my prepared statement.

As I mentioned at the outset, there are some important issues where we continue to disagree, and where the U.S. is not going to compromise its principles. These include NATO's open door policy, upholding the sovereignty of countries in the post-Soviet space, Russia's suspension of its compliance with the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty, and its backsliding on democracy and human rights issues.

As we move forward, we and the Russians will need to discuss these issues in an honest but respectful way, and keep them from damaging cooperation in other areas as much as possible.

I think that of all these areas, relations with Russia's neighbors may be the most difficult to manage. As the President said in Moscow, the United States rejects anachronistic, 19th century notions of spheres of influence or spheres of privileged interest.

That is why Vice President Biden, during his visits to Georgia and Ukraine last week, reaffirmed U.S. support for both countries' sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. In our view, good U.S. relations with Russia and cooperation with Russia's neighbors—including in the defense and security field—should not be seen as mutually exclusive.

Russia, on the other hand, continues to take a zero-sum approach, so we are going to have to continue to address these differences in a bilateral dialogue, in discussions in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on strengthening European security architecture. And we will, of course, continue to give highest priority to NATO, which is still the bedrock of transatlantic security. And as we begin to review NATO's new strategic concept, ensuring that there is no doubt about the firmness of Article 5 will be one of our highest priorities.

So, Mr. Chairman and members, the signals from Moscow since the summit have thus far been largely positive. We hope that with a more formal institutional framework for the relationship in the form of the bilateral presidential commission, we will be able to move toward a more stable and substantive partnership.

I will just conclude by saying that, if we can maintain the momentum, historians may view the Moscow summit as a turning point in U.S.-Russia relations. But there is a lot of work to be done before we can say that. We are under no illusion that the reset will be easy. Nor do we believe that a strategic partnership will simply develop overnight, since our interests do not coincide in a lot of areas.

But we do believe that improved relations between the U.S. and Russia, which had started on a downward trend long before the August 2008 events in Georgia, can help us meet many of the challenges that we face today.

So, we are cautiously optimistic, as we diplomats say, that the agreements that arose from the summit will assist our efforts broadly, from reducing strategic weapons stockpiles to bringing peace to Afghanistan.

So, thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts today, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Vershbow can be found in the Appendix on page 45.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

Admiral Winnefeld.

STATEMENT OF VICE ADM. JAMES A. WINNEFELD, JR., USN, DIRECTOR FOR STRATEGIC PLANS AND POLICY, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Admiral WINNEFELD. Chairman Skelton, Mr. McKeon and members of the committee, it is good to be back. Thank you for inviting me to address the committee today. In support of my colleagues, I will focus my comments on the military aspects of our relationship with Russia.

It goes without saying that the nature of our relationship with Russia—on the military side and elsewhere—has changed dramatically over the course of the last year, with the invasion of Georgia clearly representing a setback. And at that point, as you are aware, we suspended all military-to-military activity with the Russians.

And I would point out that that seminal event actually underscores the importance of having a strong military-to-military relationship with Russia, as with other nations in the world. Indeed, at several pivotal points during that particular conflict, the only constructive contact between our governments was the military-to-military channel.

And when I accompanied Admiral Mullen to Helsinki in October of last year to meet with his General Staff counterpart, I observed firsthand how maintaining a strong military-to-military relationship can reduce tension and mitigate misunderstanding during a crisis.

Moreover, it represented a small but important step in reinforcing our working relationship as a foundation for future progress. And we are making progress in resetting this vital relationship.

We recognize that the path towards greater partnership and in cooperation will not always be smooth. However, by not allowing our relationship to fracture when our interests diverge, we will enable the benefits of cooperating where our strategic interests actually coincide.

Positive relationships between our militaries are a foundation for good relationships between our governments and our countries. And we are working with the Russian Ministry of Defense and the General Staff to rebuild, and to try to improve, on the military-to-military programs we had before they were suspended.

And, in fact, even since the beginning of this year, we have allowed the Harvard generals program to occur in February, after a difficult decision. We conducted two port visits to Vladivostok—one in June for Russia's National Day, and one in July in support of our own Independence Day.

We have seen limited but good cooperation on countering piracy off of Somalia, with limited Russian presence in that part of the world. And we reached, as you are well aware, an agreement on transit through Russia of non-lethal supplies bound for our troops in Afghanistan, even before the summit occurred.

And as you are certainly aware, Admiral Mullen recently visited Moscow twice, once in late June for discussions with counterpart, Chief of the General Staff Makarov, and again in July in support of the presidential summit, where, in addition to various other agreements that were inked, they signed a new framework on military-to-military cooperation.

This framework is our combined vision for changing the nature of our relationship, based on the principles of pragmatism, parity, reciprocity, balance and synchronization with NATO. It will set conditions that raise cooperation to a new level between our respective armed forces, although I would echo Ambassador Vershbow in saying that this will not happen overnight.

Our interactions with Russian military officers will importantly improve their understanding of our society and lay the foundation

for future relationships such as that enjoyed by Admiral Mullen and General Makarov.

These two men are also committed to leading the military-to-military working group of the Presidential Bilateral Commission to ensure that cooperative endeavors in the military realm remain on track and continue in the strategic direction that the President has mandated.

We are currently in the midst of preparing a robust and meaningful proposal for how the military-to-military commission will function, how it will be constructed and what it will accomplish.

Meanwhile, the 2009—and remember, we only have 6 months left—the work plan approved by Admiral Mullen and General Makarov encompasses nearly 20 meaningful and mutually beneficial exchanges and operational events. It is not as much as we would like for it to be in the future, but it is a good start for the remainder of this year.

They include, among other interactions that I will be happy to list for you if you would like, joint staff talks which I will co-chair with my counterpart in Moscow, we hope in October. In addition, the U.S. European Command and the Russian Ministry of Defense are postured to create an even more ambitious work plan for the coming year.

I would like to make an important caveat, though. Our improved military relations with Russia will not come at the expense of our already positive and cooperative military relations with our NATO partners and our other important partners.

We do not believe it beneficial to engage in zero-sum gamesmanship in Eurasia or anywhere else, and we hope to convey that sentiment to our Russian colleagues to cooperative progress in areas of common strategic interest. We intend to continue our work with all parties to cultivate stability and enhance transparency throughout the region and indeed across the globe.

In conclusion, we nearly always regret severing our military relationships with another country, as we did with Pakistan in the 1980s. As such, we are getting back on a constructive footing with the Russian military without compromising our principles.

As I rediscovered in January of last year while visiting the Baltic Fleet deputy commander aboard his flagship, Moskva, in Lisbon, relationships at the tactical level are almost always warm and productive. It is our mandate to ensure that the warmth and cooperation that we enjoy at the tactical level percolates up to the strategic level, and we have every intention of succeeding.

Thank you again, sir, for the opportunity to be with the committee today. And I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Winnefeld can be found in the Appendix on page 56.]

The CHAIRMAN. Admiral, thank you very much.

Mr. Gordon. Secretary Gordon, please.

STATEMENT OF HON. PHILIP H. GORDON, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR THE BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary GORDON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Congressman McKeon and all the members of the committee. I would also like

to thank you for holding the hearing and giving us the opportunity to speak with you today about the Administration's accomplishments at the Moscow summit and about our Russia policy more generally.

I have also submitted my full testimony for the record, and here, if you will permit, would like to just make a few brief opening remarks.

The CHAIRMAN. Any prepared remarks by the witnesses will be entered, without objection.

Secretary GORDON. Thank you very much.

My colleagues have already talked about a number of the military and security issues. So I would like to begin by putting the results of the summit in a somewhat wider context.

The Obama Administration entered office seeking to put an end to a period of difficult and deteriorating relations with Russia. Last December, then-President-elect Obama talked about a reset in our relations with Russia.

What he argued was that the United States and Russia have common interests in a number of areas. These include nuclear nonproliferation, Afghanistan, terrorism and many others. And he argued that it should be possible to cooperate practically in these areas, even as we disagreed on other issues.

And I think it is fair to say that the results of the Moscow summit demonstrate that the President's instincts on this were correct. Just six months since the President took office, and just three months since he and President Medvedev met in London and agreed to hold the summit in Moscow, the United States and Russia have gone far towards achieving a fresh start and reaching concrete accomplishments.

At the summit, our leaders made progress in improving the tone of our relations and helping to build good will between our two countries. But perhaps even more importantly at the summit, we were able to translate this rhetoric about potential cooperation into concrete actions that are fundamental to the security and prosperity of both of our countries.

This significant progress in our relations with Russia, let me stress, did not in any way come at the expense of our principles or our partnerships with good friends and allies. There are still many areas where the United States and Russia disagree. My colleagues have already mentioned Georgia and NATO enlargement among them. And we will continue to disagree about these and, no doubt, other issues.

The President made this clear in Moscow. And he also did not shy away from raising—both privately and publicly—issues such as democracy, human rights and press freedoms. At the same time, in Moscow, we also demonstrated in real terms our shared desire to build a relationship based on common interests and mutual respect.

As my colleagues have pointed out already, the United States and Russia took important steps to increase nuclear security and prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, beginning with the reduction of our own nuclear arsenals. The two Presidents signed a joint understanding for a follow-on agreement to START that commits both parties to a legally binding treaty that will reduce our nuclear

warheads and delivery systems by at least one-third over current treaty limitations.

President Obama and his Russian counterparts spoke at great length on Iran. And the President underscored the importance we place on international efforts to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. President Obama also emphasized the importance of Russia's role in pressing Iran to comply with its nonproliferation obligations.

In addition, the Presidents agreed to participate in a joint threat assessment of the ballistic missile challenges of the 21st century, including those posed by Iran and North Korea. An interagency team of experts is already heading out to Moscow this week to begin discussions of this joint threat assessment.

In another related area, we made concrete commitments to deepen security cooperation, including by working together to defeat the violent extremists and to counter transnational threats, including those of piracy and narcotics trafficking.

As my colleagues have pointed out, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mullen and his Russian counterpart have agreed on a work plan of resuming military-to-military contacts that were cut off after the war in Georgia.

I think another very tangible result of the summit was Russia's agreement to allow the United States to transport military personnel and equipment across Russia in support of the NATO-led International Security and Assistance Force and our other coalition forces in Afghanistan. This agreement will add flexibility and further diversify our crucial supply routes, resulting in potential savings of up to $133 million in fuel, maintenance and transportation costs.

The significance of this contribution to our efforts to bring peace and stability in Afghanistan—which is also of strategic benefit to Russia—should not be understated. It is indeed an excellent example of how the two countries can cooperate in pursuit of common interests without any quid pro quos.

We also agreed to strengthen cooperation in nonstrategic areas, including public health, and by restoring the work of the Joint Commission on Prisoners of War and Missing in Action.

Finally, President Obama and President Medvedev recognized the need for a more structured foundation for advancing cooperation in key areas across our respective interagencies. The Bilateral Presidential Commission, to be chaired by the two Presidents and coordinated by Secretary Clinton and Foreign Minister Lavrov, will provide a mechanism for sustaining and expanding on the progress achieved in Moscow while also providing a forum in which we can work together to effectively narrow our differences.

Notwithstanding all these positive developments, I want to stress we have no illusions that our reset of relations will be easy, or that we will not have continuing differences with Russia. We are, however, confident that the United States and Russia can still work together where our interests coincide, while at the same time seeking to narrow those differences in a mutually respectful way.

In this regard, the President was unequivocal in his message that the reset in our bilateral relationship will not come at the expense of our friends and our allies. More than in words but in ac-

tions, we have demonstrated our commitment to the territorial integrity and independence of Russia's neighbors, including Ukraine and Georgia. President Obama made very clear in Moscow that we will continue to support their sovereignty and their right to choose their own security alliances, a message that was reinforced last week by the Vice President in his trip to both of those countries.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, at the Moscow summit the United States and Russia took significant steps forward in translating the reset in our relations into concrete achievements that benefit both our nations and our global partners. Without abandoning our principles or our friends, we demonstrated that the United States and Russia can work effectively together on a broad range of issues where our interests coincide.

Thank you again for giving us the opportunity to address these issues, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Gordon can be found in the Appendix on page 63.]

The CHAIRMAN. I think, Secretary Gordon, my questions should be addressed to you.

Can you give a quick summary of the relationship between Russia and Iran? And I have follow-up questions on them.

Please?

Secretary GORDON. I think, in terms of the way we look at the need for cooperation with Russia and Iran, there are some positive elements and some less positive elements.

I believe that Russia shares our interest in preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. And they have taken some constructive steps along with us to achieve that goal. They have agreed to several U.N. Security Council resolutions making it illegal for Iran to enrich uranium, and imposing sanctions on Iran for doing so.

And they have joined us in the so-called P5-plus-1 or E3-plus-3 process, which is our main diplomatic mechanism for showing Iran a path to cooperation with the international community, if it agrees to provide reassurance it is not producing nuclear weapons, but also making clear to Iran that there would be consequences if it fails to do so. And I believe that Russia has constructively worked with us within that context.

At the same time, let me be honest. We do not see Iran exactly the same way. And as I noted, the President raised this very clearly with his counterparts—and they probably discussed this more than any other issue in Moscow—because we believe that Russia has an important role to play. If Iran fails to respond to the offer that is currently on the table, we believe that pressure needs to be enhanced on Iran, and that requires Russian cooperation.

Russians have been less convinced than we are that such pressure will need to be applied. And therefore, we continue to work with the Russians and make it very clear to them that we hope and expect them to work with us on the way forward, if Iran fails to respond.

The CHAIRMAN. That leads me to the question: Will Russia support us should events come to pass in the United Nations Security Council to have strong economic sanctions against Iran, if further evidence emerges that Iran is developing nuclear weapons?

Secretary GORDON. Well, we will certainly seek such cooperation.

For a number of years, a number of countries including——

The CHAIRMAN. That is not answering my question.

Secretary GORDON. Well, I will get to that.

What I was going to say is, we have been working for a number of years—for a number of years, countries including Russia have been asking us to be prepared to engage with Iran and make sure that Iran has an alternative to pressure and sanctions, to make sure that Iran has an alternative path if they do cooperate with the international community.

We have now done that. The President has made clear we are prepared to support a civil nuclear energy program for Iran. And we are prepared to talk directly with Iran. And we are prepared to support the other members of the Security Council in offering Iran such a path forward.

That is on the table. And we have responded to the requests by our allies in Europe and in Russia to offer Iran that opportunity.

And we have said, and the President has made clear, that if Iran does not respond soon—certainly by the end of the year—we will then come back to our partners on the Security Council and say we have offered that path, and now it is time to increase the pressure.

So, there is only one way to find out. We will take it back to the Security Council and seek Russian cooperation.

Can I guarantee that they will give a positive answer? No. But that is what we are working to achieve.

The CHAIRMAN. What arms transfer and what nuclear cooperation has passed from Russia to Iran in recent months and years?

Secretary GORDON. In terms of nuclear cooperation, Russia has for years provided assistance to Iran in finishing the construction of the Bushehr nuclear reactor, which is not necessarily a contribution to their nuclear weapons program. And so long as the fuel cycle is controlled by Russia, that can be contained without undue proliferation concerns.

Beyond that, I do not think that Russia is in any way involved in contributing to nuclear cooperation in ways that would lead to Iran acquiring a nuclear weapon.

The great concern in Iran, indeed, is its own autonomous capabilities. Our great concern in Iran is that it develops itself the technology to master the full fuel cycle, which would give it the opportunity to so-called break out of its nuclear nonproliferation obligations and produce its own nuclear weapons.

So, it is not so much a matter of Russia's cooperation with Iran in the nuclear area; it is Iran's development of autonomous technology that would give it a fuel cycle and a breakout capacity. And that is what we are working with Russia and others to try to prevent.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. McKeon.

Mr. MCKEON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for your testimony and for your service.

As I mentioned in my opening statement, in March General Craddock assessed that Russia's intent may be to weaken European solidarity and systematically reduce the U.S. influence.

I would like to ask each of you if you share General Craddock's assessment.

And then, does the Administration have any concerns regarding President Medvedev's proposed European security treaty? And does the Administration support EUCOM's efforts to conduct deliberative planning?

Secretary GORDON. I am happy to start. I am sure my colleagues will want to weigh in.

The short answer to the first question is, yes, there have certainly been signs that Russia has an interest, or pursues an interest, in dividing the Western alliance. I think we always have to be careful in talking about Russia in deciding which Russians we are talking about. I think I would not want to issue such a blanket statement that all Russians pursue this. I think there are others who do not.

But, yes, for sure there have been signs of Russian efforts to divide the West and to prevent what they would see as undue American influence and hegemony. I think that is accurate.

On the President Medvedev idea of a European security treaty, we have said that we are always open to discussions of European security and happy to have a dialogue with Russia and our other partners about how it can be strengthened.

But we have also said that we believe there are already some pretty sound European security organizations, including, first and foremost, NATO, also including the OSCE. And those are the channels in which this discussion should take place.

The NATO-Russia Council is an opportunity for us to speak with the Russians about European security. And the OSCE is a chance for all 56 of its participating states to have exactly the sort of discussion that the Russians have proposed. So, we have insisted that that discussion take place at the OSCE, as it did at the recent ministerial.

And frankly, there was not a lot of support for a Russian idea of some sort of new treaty, because, as I say, not only do we think we already have some pretty good institutions, we already have some pretty good principles for European security including a nonuse of force and respect for territorial integrity, and the principle that countries can join the alliances of their choosing.

So, we are open to dialogue, we are happy to hear Russian ideas, and we are happy to talk to them. But we think it should remain in established channels based on the principles that we have already agreed on.

Mr. MCKEON. And finally, do you support EUCOM's efforts to conduct deliberative planning?

Secretary GORDON. Yes, that is a very important manifestation of our commitment to NATO's Article 5. I am sure my colleagues will want to elaborate on this. But the short answer is, "yes."

Mr. MCKEON. Thank you.

Secretary VERSHBOW. Mr. McKeon, I certainly share my colleague's assessment that the Russians continue to practice the kind of policies that General Craddock described in terms of seeking to create divisions between the U.S. and its allies, and to create anxieties on the parts of our allies, particularly the new members of NATO in Central Europe, regarding their security.

But I think the Russians at the same time are also realistic. And if we are doing our jobs in terms of ensuring that our security

guarantees through NATO remain effective, and that we make clear that key initiatives such as missile defense are not going to be bargaining chips, I think that we can manage this and steer the Russians towards a more cooperative agenda. It is not going to be an easy challenge, but that is certainly our goal.

I cannot add much to Phil Gordon's comments on the Medvedev proposals. I think that we certainly see room for improving some of the mechanism's effectiveness in preventing conflicts.

What happened a year ago in Georgia, clearly, is something that we do not want to see repeated. And to the extent that we can improve the effectiveness of mechanisms like the NATO-Russia Council, the OSCE, in diffusing these kinds of situations before they escalate, I think everybody's security would be enhanced.

But we do not think that we need to scrap the institutions we have. And I think the Russians, after initial signals that their agenda was to eliminate NATO or to downgrade NATO's role, have taken a more realistic approach, and have said as much, including in the Moscow summit, when they insisted that they were not trying to abolish NATO.

We do definitely believe that not only EUCOM but NATO as a whole should be doing the prudent planning for the defense of all of its members. And I think this is something that President Obama attaches great significance to, as does Secretary Gates. And it will be something that we will be pursuing as we engage with our allies in the formulation of NATO's new strategic concept, which we are hoping to complete by the end of next year when NATO has another summit in Lisbon.

Admiral WINNEFELD. Sir, for the first two questions, I think my other colleagues are better positioned to answer those than I am. But I would tend to concur that the Russian behavior over the long term has been transactional, balance of power, and that they will take whatever they can get.

I think the important thing is that, we have seen from our allies and our friends in Europe that they have exercised considerable resolve, and they understand the nature of a Russian proposal to do what they have suggested. And I think that Russia has recognized the resolve that these nations have shown.

And, in fact, I think there was a recent comment from one of them—one of the Russians—that, "Well, we don't really want to change the hardware; we just want to change the software," you know, sort of backing down off of that proposal just a little bit.

So, I think I am not concerned about the commitment of our friends in Europe to maintaining the health of the current mechanisms that are there, while they are interested in listening to what the Russians have to say, as they should.

On the last point, it goes without saying that any discussion of actual military planning is a sensitive topic that I would be cautious in an open hearing in discussing.

But I would also add that we tend to be very supportive of our combatant commanders when they come in and suggest that they need to do some planning, and that Admiral Stavridis has only been in the seat, as it were, for several weeks. And we know that he is building his thought process and his opinions on what he

would like to do there. And we will listen very closely when he comes in with a formal proposal, should he have one.

Mr. MCKEON. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, we have a lot of members, so I will do these other questions later or in writing. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. McKeon.

Mr. Taylor.

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Chairman, I am going to yield to Mr. Loebsack.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Well, thank you, Mr. Taylor. I really appreciate the opportunity to speak to our witnesses.

And thanks to all of you for your service. In particular, I guess I——

The CHAIRMAN. Will the gentleman suspend just for a moment?

The clock showed two lights for a vote. That is a Senate vote and not a House vote. The House is not wired for this room evidently, so we can ignore that.

Mr. Loebsack, you can proceed.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Thank you.

Mr. LARSEN. Mr. Chairman, can we ignore the Senate as well?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

[Laughter.]

Mr. LOEBSACK. Suddenly, we are all members of the Senate.

The CHAIRMAN. Who said that?

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Larsen, we will take that under consideration.

Mr. LOEBSACK. We might get bipartisan support for that proposal.

If we could just spend a little time on Afghanistan, perhaps broaden it out to Pakistan as well, to the region.

I think it was you, Mr. Gordon, who mentioned supply routes. Can you elaborate on that a little bit to begin with?

Secretary GORDON. Sure. And as I noted, that was what I think is a very good example of the type of cooperation we can pursue in areas where we have common interests, even while we strongly disagree in other areas.

Mr. LOEBSACK. First, can you tell us what those common interests are? How do our interests coincide in this?

Secretary GORDON. I think both the United States and Russia have a very strong interest in a stable and peaceful Afghanistan. We have both, of course, fought wars and made sacrifices and lost lives and spent a lot of money in Afghanistan when it was unstable.

And Russia, like the United States, has an interest in stemming Islamic extremism which, of course, emanated from Afghanistan and struck this country so tragically.

So I do not think we have different interests in Afghanistan. Broadly at least, we both have interests in stabilizing that country.

And that is precisely what we said to the Russians. "We may disagree in other areas, but we are working very hard with the rest of the international community to try to stabilize Afghanistan. You have an interest in that as well. It would help us if you allowed us to transit your country and diversify our supply routes."

And the agreement that we reached allows the United States to undertake up to 4,500 flights, including military flights, across Afghanistan to get what we need to our troops there. And, as you know, that is such a difficult challenge, given Afghanistan's location.

And we were able to do that. The estimates are that doing so, depending on how many flights we end up flying, could save this country $133 million a year by having the shorter routes to fly. And that will directly and concretely benefit us.

And as I said in my opening statement, there was not a quid pro quo. And that is just the sort of positive working together that we are seeking to achieve—not, they will allow us to fly across their territory, Afghanistan, if we do X or Y on Georgia or in NATO. No. We have a common interest and let us do it.

So, it is a concrete agreement, and I think it directly benefits the United States.

Mr. LOEBSACK. What about other countries in the region, Central Asian states, for example? What is Russia's relationship with them and their allowing us over-flight rights as well?

Secretary GORDON. There has been some sort of competition in terms of influence in those countries, at least through Russian eyes. They have been cautious about any American presence or involvement in what they see as their near abroad. And that has been a problem, because, again, we keep trying to stress that we should not see our relationship with Russia in zero-sum terms.

Just to take a concrete example, if the United States is able to fly supply missions to Afghanistan from Kyrgyzstan, we would argue that Russia should have an interest in that. It helps our common goal of stabilizing Afghanistan.

Russia has seen it somewhat differently, and is worried about any American presence in what they consider to be their backyard.

But we are now to the point where the United States does have an agreement to use Kyrgyzstan territory to help supply in Afghanistan. We think that should not threaten Russia. And I think maybe the Russians have come around to that view.

And that, again, is the example of the sort of thing we should be able to do without the other country seeing it in any way as a geopolitical threat. That is precisely the sort of thinking we are trying to get beyond, the notion that a gain for the United States is a setback for Russia, or vice versa.

Being able to operate out of Kyrgyzstan is a gain for the United States. It should not be seen as a threat to Russia.

Mr. LOEBSACK. And what about counterterrorism efforts, cooperation with respect to Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Russian counterterrorism efforts and ours?

Secretary GORDON. They are nowhere near playing the sort of role that we are and some of our NATO allies. But at the same time, they are not interfering in the role that we are trying to play.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Okay.

Any others want to make any comments on that?

Admiral WINNEFELD. I would simply add that we have a common interest with Russia in the drug piece coming out of Afghanistan. Both Iran, candidly, and Russia have tremendous markets for those drugs, and they flow freely across their borders. And it wor-

ries Russia tremendously. And they would like—the cooperation there is good.

Secretary VERSHBOW. I would just add, coming back to the supply routes issue, as you know, Congressman, there have been problems with some of the routes through Pakistan in recent months. So our goal has been to establish a network of multiple routes through Central Asia, through the Caucasus, through airfields in the Persian Gulf region, where we have close friends who provided us access, so that we are not dependent on any one route.

So, the Russians have expressed understanding and said that transit is something that they can support.

But as Mr. Gordon said, they are very touchy about the presence of U.S. forces on the territory of former Soviet republics. They keep saying that permanent bases are unacceptable, and we keep assuring them that we do not have any long-term designs to have permanent bases in the region.

The Afghan campaign has gone on longer, perhaps, than we anticipated. But our aim is to support the war effort only as long as that is necessary.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Thanks to all of you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And thank you, Mr. Taylor.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Turner.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, gentlemen, for being here.

Mr. Gordon, you indicated that you were excited to come and speak to us about some of the achievements that occurred in Moscow. And I am certain that you know that many have also some concerns about what is coming out of the discussions in Moscow, and I am looking forward to getting some of your additional thoughts.

When we take a look at the Joint Understanding on a Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty that was signed, it included a provision that each nation would reduce their strategic delivery vehicles to a range of 500 to 1,100, from 1,600 in the 1991 START 1 Treaty, and the associated warheads to 1,500, to 1,675 from 1,700, to 2,220 in the 2002 Moscow treaty.

Obviously, the concern arises on what would be a drastic reduction in the level of delivery vehicles, if we were to go to a level of 500. The bipartisan Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States, led by Drs. Perry and Schlesinger, believe that the triad of strategic nuclear delivery systems should be maintained, with our number somewhere around currently 1,200 of deployed ICBMs, SLBMs and bombers. And reducing it to a level of 500 would certainly be a very drastic reduction.

Secondly, the joint understanding also included a statement saying that a provision on the inter-relationship of strategic offensive and strategic defensive arms. Russian President Medvedev had suggested that progress on START could hinge on the U.S. giving up its European missile defense plans. It would appear that the Administration is considering such a concession by addressing defense arms in START.

And then thirdly, the issue of—according to March 2009 data from the National Nuclear Security Administration, Russia is estimated to possess 3,800 operational tactical nuclear weapons, while the U.S. possesses less than 500. The START joint understanding does not address Russia's tactical nuclear weapons.

So, the questions that follow arise out of the concerns of, you know, with such a drastic reduction that could be signaled in the joint understanding on delivery vehicles, what is the effect on our nuclear triad? And is that then at risk?

And secondly, on the issue of our defensive arms, is the Administration including missile defense in the START negotiations?

And then thirdly, since the joint understanding does not include Russia's tactical nuclear weapons, does the Administration plan to address Russia's overwhelming number of tactical nuclear weapons?

Secretary GORDON. Thank you for raising all those important issues. Let me make a couple of comments, including, in particular, on the offense-defense and missile defense issue. And I hope my colleagues in the Pentagon will elaborate further on the warheads issues.

Just broadly what I would say on the tactical nuclear weapons, no, the START follow-on agreement is the follow-on agreement to a treaty reducing offensive weapons. And that is what it is focused on, because we believe that both countries have an interest in reducing the numbers of their offensive nuclear weapons. So, it does not focus on tactical weapons.

Again, I would say broadly, while deferring to my colleagues on some of the specifics of the triads or the numbers, but that the basic belief is that we can certainly maintain our deterrent adequately, even at the lower numbers in these ranges of 500 delivery vehicles and 1,500 warheads.

On the issue of missile defense relationship to START, I want to be very clear. There is not a relationship between our thinking about missile defense in Europe and the START Treaty. There was not at the summit, and there will not be subsequently.

On missile defense in Europe, the President has been quite clear all along that he believes there is a growing threat from ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons, particularly from Iran, and that if we can deploy missile defenses in Europe or elsewhere that will protect us and our allies from that threat, we should do so.

When he came into office, he asked for a review of plans to do that, to make sure that we were going about it in the best way possible. And that review is currently under way. And what I want to stress is that that review is being driven by our perception of the threat, particularly from Iran, and by our assessment of the technology that would be used in achieving this goal.

And the goal, again, is how do we best protect Americans and our European allies from the growing threat from ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons. It is not what do other countries think, including Russia, or what is the impact of this on START.

And I also want to point out, because I think it is quite relevant, as you noted, sir, the Russians insisted all along that the price for these agreements in Moscow would be us abandoning the so-called "third site" in Europe. And in particular, they did not want to have

even a statement about missile defense, unless we agreed beforehand to do that.

We did not do so. We refused to do so. And it was not until the morning of the summit that they understood that we were serious about that, and went ahead with the joint statement on missile defense and the agreement to a joint threat assessment from Iran. And as I say, our people are already heading over there now, to try to share with them our analysis of the Iran situation and convince them of its seriousness.

So, no, there is not a link between missile defense and START, or anything else. Missile defense decisions would be driven by what the threat is and how we think we can best protect Americans and Europeans.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank the gentleman.

Mr. Kissell.

Mr. KISSELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just a few quick questions, Mr. Secretary and Mr. Vershbow.

Who is in charge in Russia? And what is the relationship between the President and the Prime Minister?

Secretary GORDON. If I could defer to our former ambassador to Moscow. I will make a comment, and then I am sure our former ambassador in Moscow will have a view.

What I will not do is speculate on who is up and who is down. Russia has a president, President Medvedev. That is our President's counterpart, and that is who he mainly met with at the summit.

He spent more than four hours with President Medvedev and talked about the full range of issues. And he signed the agreements that he signed with President Medvedev.

He also met with Prime Minister Putin, because Prime Minister Putin is the prime minister and a significant figure in Russia, and has significant influence.

And we will not get engaged in really trying to figure out who does what. They have a constitution. They have a system. We deal with the President. We also acknowledge the importance of the Prime Minister. And we have reached agreements with Russia, and those are the ones that we intend to continue to pursue.

Are there differences in emphasis? Yes, I think it is accurate to say that there are. Read their public statements, and I think you see some differences.

But we can only deal with the government that is on the other side, and that is what we do.

Secretary VERSHBOW. Well, Congressman, I cannot add much to that. It is clear that we are dealing with what the Russians themselves are calling a "tin democracy." And I think President Medvedev has been a close ally of now-Prime Minister Putin for many years. And I think that they do represent a team.

And as Mr. Gordon said, under the constitution, President Medvedev is the head of state and has overall responsibility for foreign policy. And therefore, he is President Obama's principal counterpart. But President Putin clearly wields considerable influence in that system, as prime minister has responsibility for the economy. And so I think that, as Mr. Gordon said, we deal with the government structure as it is.

And I think that the conversations in Moscow that our President had with both of them suggested that there is not huge daylight between them. And I think that the progress that we made, we must assume reflects a consensus between the two leaders, even if, as Mr. Gordon said, they do have different accents in talking about certain issues, reflecting their different backgrounds.

Mr. KISSELL. Why do you think you made more progress in the recent talks? Why do you think the Russians were more ready to concede, cooperate, whatever, than we had expected?

Secretary GORDON. One can only speculate. We cannot know why Russians do what they do. It does seem, however, that the first six months of the Administration were a testing period. They wanted to see if maybe it was the case that we would be prepared to make all sorts of concessions in the name of a reset, in the name of a successful summit, in the name of getting over the deteriorating relations that I talked about.

That would not be a surprising policy for Russia to pursue and test us, insist that we give up missile defense in order to reach agreements, insist that we make concessions on START, because we might want a successful summit.

And I think, to be very frank, we showed them that that was not going to be the case. We were quite clear all along. We do want some agreements. We do want a better relationship. We do not think this is a zero-sum game in which we always have different interests. But we are not going to trade off important principles or allies in order to have a successful summit.

Just for example, the issue of the U.N. follow-on mission in Georgia came up within two weeks of the summit. And I think some were wondering, if we were so keen on having a good relationship with Russia or a successful summit, that we would agree to whatever at the U.N. on Georgia in order to have a successful summit. But we did not, because we had red lines. We had certain principles that we were not going to walk away from where Georgia was concerned.

We stuck to our guns, and the Russians ended up vetoing the U.N. follow-on mission in Georgia. And we were prepared to do that, because there are certain things we are just not willing to concede on.

And I think that, to really answer your question, once they realized that was the case, then they went ahead and reached more agreements than, frankly, I at least would have predicted even a week before the summit.

Mr. KISSELL. One real quick question as my time—has just gone. Yes, thank you.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Sorry.

Mr. Coffman, please.

Mr. COFFMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you so much for your service to our country.

Can you give me an estimate of the current governance of Russia? It seems that either they have legitimate concerns in terms of their security, or it is a state which—a nation-state—which is devolving more into an autocracy, to where they are trying to estab-

lish their legitimacy by focusing or, if not creating, threats, to establish legitimacy to the Russian people.

But, I mean, their view of NATO, the expansion of NATO, their view of U.S. influence in satellite states that were former Soviet republics, as was mentioned earlier, missile defense, political and military interventions in Georgia and Ukraine—you know, are these based on legitimate historic fears of the Russian people? Or is this an autocratic government trying to flex its power and gain legitimacy that way?

Secretary GORDON. Legitimate or not, I would certainly say these Russian fears exist and are unfounded. I believe it is accurate to say that Russia has historical concerns and insecurities that have led it to conclude that its most promising path for its own security is to dominate its neighbors.

That is a historical Russian perception, and it continues to exist today to, what I would say, is an unfortunate degree, because I do not think it is accurate.

I genuinely believe that Russia would have an interest in stable, prosperous democracies on its borders, even if they should be members of NATO, and that this perception that Russia has that somehow European security should be seen in zero-sum terms. And if its neighbors like Ukraine want to be friendly to the United States, or want to join the European Union or NATO, that is a threat to Russia. I believe that that is inaccurate.

But really, to get at your question, the Russian view, at least for many Russians—again, I want to be careful about over-generalizing, because I think different Russians have different views. And hopefully, with time, the next generation will have a different view, and may come to the view that stable democracies in Russia's neighbors is in Russia's interest.

But right now, yes. The predominant view in Russia is that they are better off dominating their neighbors, even if that means instability, than accepting the choices of those neighbors—unfortunately.

Secretary VERSHBOW. If I could add, I agree with all of what my colleague said.

I think you have both phenomena at work when you talk about what is driving Russia, what is the governance in Russia when it comes to their national security policy. And they clearly do have some legitimate security concerns which overlap with ours, whether it is violent extremism, which has affected them in Chechnya, and even in Moscow with terrorist bombings a few years ago.

I think they do share an interest in controlling the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and working with us to try to thwart Iran's nuclear ambitions.

But it is when you get closer to their borders when the more negative impulses, I think, tend to dominate. And that is why those are going to be the toughest issues for us to manage as we go forward.

But I think that, objectively speaking, as Mr. Gordon said, Russia is not threatened by NATO or by new countries, new democracies coming into NATO. The real security threats facing Russia are largely to their south.

And that is where I think we are going to try to expand our cooperation while continuing the dialogue, trying to convince them that NATO, whose mission now is largely to deal with distant security challenges like Afghanistan, bringing durable stability to the Balkans, is actually contributing to Russia's security rather than posing a threat. But that is going to be a long debate.

I think there is a tendency on the part of some Russian leaders to overdramatize external threats as a tool of maintaining political control and discipline at home. And the system is not one which has all the checks and balances and instruments of accountability that we would like. So, a kind of xenophobic mentality has entered into the Russian consciousness—not just on the part of the leaders, but on the part of the people.

So, this is going to be a continuing problem for us going forward.

Mr. COFFMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

The gentleman from Washington, Mr. Larsen.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral, I do not want you to feel left out, so I had a few things for you.

Actually, in your testimony you discuss some of the U.S. naval activity in the Black Sea region and the unforeseen increase in military activity in the region having to do with our humanitarian visits to Georgia, as opposed to anything else. Also, you discuss Russian military exercises in the region.

Just on the idea of exercises with this reset taking place, and some questions about whether—you know, we do not see things as a zero-sum game; perhaps the Russians do.

What objectives or goals would we hope to seek through some of these military exercises with the Russians in that context of how we are perceiving each other?

Admiral WINNEFELD. So, I believe you are asking about the military exercises with the Russians, not with Black Sea partners.

Mr. LARSEN. That is correct, yes. Sorry.

Admiral WINNEFELD. We believe that, whenever we are able to exercise with the Russians or another partner, that we gain common understanding, that we are able to better understand each other's operating principles and techniques, tactics and procedures, so that when we do have a common objective—for example, in piracy off of Somalia—that we can work more effectively together.

And we are seeing the drawbacks of not exercising with them, frankly, on the naval side as much as we would like to in those piracy operations off of Somalia.

The Russians have had a near-continuous presence of a destroyer crew—you know, a small ship out there—along with their logistics support ships. We have had collegial and friendly interactions with them. They have appeared at the shared awareness and deconfliction events, and, in fact, are great supporters of those events.

But we still find that we do not have the kinds of connectivity and signaling techniques, and the like, that we would like to enjoy with them in order to make that counter-piracy operation effective.

One way of doing that is to exercise together. Another way of doing that is just to operate habitually together.

And before the Georgia crisis, we did have intermittent operations in Operation Active Endeavor in the Mediterranean, which is a counterterrorist, counter-proliferation type of operation, in which a Russian ship would show up perhaps once a year, and we would enjoy some contact like that. And I think that sort of stretches across the board in land, air and sea domains in which it is healthy for us to exercise together.

As I mentioned earlier, you have the opportunity to build personal relationships with individual Russian leaders, who may grow up someday to be important Russian leaders. And I think that is a very important interaction for us to have, because, as I mentioned, the sort of warm feelings and understanding you are able to achieve at that tactical exercise level are something we would like to percolate up into the higher levels where there tends to be a little bit more bureaucracy in scheduling meetings and that sort of thing than we would like to see from the Russia side.

Mr. LARSEN. Okay. Will you speak a little bit, then, to the idea that the Russians and the Chinese also have done separate military exercises recently?

And I know some of us have pressed the previous Administration, and I imagine we will press this Administration, and make a request that we be observers at those exercises as well. And, of course, we have been turned down, I think, in the past for that.

Can you talk a little bit about the relationship between, say, Russian military exercises with other countries, and that we are not participating in that we would like to participate in? Can we use these relationships to press that case?

Admiral WINNEFELD. I think that you make a good point. We are always seeking transparency in our relationship with whoever it is—Russia, China, and the like. And we have talked about inviting Chinese observers to certain exercises that we conduct. And we would love to be able to participate as observers in exercises that might be under the aegis of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, or other events that Russia does with other people—other nations that it considers its partners.

Transparency is good. It builds confidence on both sides that you understand the purpose of the exercise and the actual tactics, techniques and procedures that were used in the exercise to make sure that nothing is amiss. And we invite them to observe our exercises all the time. And they do not always appear. But the invitation is out there.

So I think the fundamental principle is that transparency is good. We seek more of it. And I think we are meeting them more than halfway, and in the hopes that they will understand that it is in their interest to do the same.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Shuster.

Mr. SHUSTER. That was quick.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Mr. SHUSTER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank all of you for being here today. And I apologize if you have had this question asked before.

I just was concerned about the Russians issuing a decree on opposing sanctions against manufacturers who sell arms to Georgia. I wondered if this will cause U.S. policy to change in supporting the Georgian military.

Secretary VERSHBOW. I think this Russian announcement is unfortunate, but it will certainly not alter our policy. We think that Georgia, as a sovereign state, has not only a legitimate right to choose its security alliances, but also a legitimate right to have a military capacity to defend its own borders, and also to participate in multinational operations.

So, we have developed a strategy of providing security assistance to Georgia, which will focus in the short term on helping raise the professional standards, helping them institute more high-quality defense personnel management systems, improving their training.

But over time, we are prepared to consider the provision of defensive weapons to Georgia, as well. And we are also supporting their NATO aspirations and are helping them do the very arduous process of submitting their annual national program to NATO as they pursue their candidacy there.

So, as I said, the Russian announcement is unfortunate, but it is not going to alter our policy.

Mr. SHUSTER. That is good to hear.

Also, is there any consideration—is the Administration considering to participate in the European Union monitoring mission that is going on in Georgia?

Secretary GORDON. About that I would say that we think that is a critical mission. As you know, we lost the presence of the OSCE monitors in South Ossetia, because the Russians did not agree to a proposal that almost everyone else in the OSCE did. And we lost the U.N. presence in Abkhazia, because the Russians vetoed the follow-on agreement.

And in the absence of those two missions, the European Union stepped up with more than 250 monitors. And we support that mission, because we think it is critically important that there be independent, objective monitors on the ground.

The E.U. last week agreed to extend that mission for another year, and we are very pleased about that. No one has invited us to participate. We want to be supportive in whatever way we can.

Mr. SHUSTER. Would that be something that we would consider, if somebody invited us to participate?

Secretary GORDON. We will consider any way to strengthen efforts to make sure that there are appropriate, independent, international monitors on the ground in Georgia, yes.

Mr. SHUSTER. And just in general, what is your assessment of the situation? I have spoken to some Georgians. They do not think it has gotten any better, and in some cases worse. Just your general observations on that situation in Georgia.

Secretary GORDON. Well, the situation in Georgia is a troubling one. Russian forces remain in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Georgian territorial integrity and sovereignty is being violated.

As the Vice President made clear in Georgia, we do not believe that there is a short-term or a military solution to this issue. But we will also not turn away from it. I think there, the Russians may

hope that, in the absence of the U.N. and OSCE missions we would just say, okay, you know, too bad. We will walk away.

On the contrary, we have brought it up at every occasion, including the President in Moscow, including the ongoing Geneva talks, and including through the support of the E.U. monitoring mission. We do not consider the situation resolved. We think Russia should implement the cease-fire agreements of August and September 2008, in support of Georgian territorial integrity.

Mr. SHUSTER. Well, I am pleased to hear you say that.

Ambassador, were you going to add to that?

Secretary VERSHBOW. Nothing really much to add.

We have not been asked yet, as far as the E.U. amendment is concerned. But I think we are considering the possibility, if we are asked.

Mr. SHUSTER. Right. Well, I am pleased to hear that, because in dealing with the countries in that region, and the Ukraine, Azerbaijan, they are all very, very concerned about what America is going to do in regard to Georgia and Russia. And so, I think it is important that we stay strong with the Georgians.

Secretary GORDON. If I might just permit myself to add in the context of staying strong with the Georgians, I have talked about how the President emphasized these important points, and the Vice President did when he was there last week.

We have also, thanks to Congress' support, completed the $1 billion assistance package to Georgia to help the country rebuild from the war. And that is already paying dividends in the Georgian economy and helping resettle refugees who were expelled.

We have launched a commission following up on the U.S.-Georgia strategic cooperation arrangement from last year, which met recently in Washington. As I noted, the Vice President has recently been to Georgia. The Deputy Secretary and I have been there twice.

We are actively demonstrating our support for Georgia, even while reminding the Georgians that they need to make more progress in their own democracy, and that they need to avoid any provocative actions. I think our relationship with Georgia is very strong.

Mr. SHUSTER. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Spratt, please.

Mr. SPRATT. Thanks very much for your testimony. I have been in and out, and may have missed this question. It may have been asked before.

Basically, what is the status of our deployment of missile defenses in the Czech Republic and in Poland? And is there any discussion, or was there any discussion with the Russians of alternative locations or alternative means of accomplishing the same objective, but with different locations?

Secretary GORDON. We did comment on this briefly earlier. And what was said was that we are reviewing our approach to missile defense in Europe.

The President believes that we should do what is necessary to protect ourselves and our European allies from a growing threat of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. He has ordered a review of

plans to deploy an X-band radar in the Czech Republic and interceptors in Poland.

And that review is being driven by our perception of the threat from Iran and the technology. And we hope that that review will be done by the end of the year, so that we can move forward in the way that best would defend us and our allies.

In terms of the Russians, what their discussion of it—what there has been discussion with Russia of—is ways in which Russia and the United States could cooperate on the issue of missile defense. Because as we have made quite clear, any missile defenses we deploy in Europe will not be directed at Russia. They are designed to deal with a different threat. And the size of deployments considered could not in any way threaten the Russian arsenal anyway.

So, we have been open with the Russians, as the previous Administration was, in terms of exploring the possibility of cooperation that could help protect both of our countries. We have sent a delegation to Moscow several times.

It is true the Russians continue to say that they do not want to talk about cooperation unless and until we give up or change our current plans. And we continue to make clear that that criterion is not acceptable to us.

But we do think that we have a common interest in protecting ourselves from missile defenses. And if the Russians want to work with us on that, then we would be open to that.

Secretary VERSHBOW. If I could just emphasize, we are looking at the question of European missile defense as part of the broader missile defense review. And the site in Poland and the radar in Czech Republic are among the options that are being considered, together with other options that might be able to perform the mission, as well.

Mr. SPRATT. Does your review include alternative locations and alternative defenses?

Secretary VERSHBOW. We are looking at a range of options. It is really not appropriate to get into what those options are, but we are reviewing these internally. We are not engaged in any discussion with the Russians about alternative options at this point, until the review is completed.

And as we have stressed, our conclusions will be based exclusively on the threat from Iran, the effectiveness of the systems and the cost. We want to see what is the best way to meet the real and growing threat from Iran to ourselves and to our allies.

But we do, as Mr. Gordon said, believe that this is something that the Russians should see a common interest in. They, too, could be threatened by long-range ballistic missiles from Iran, and that there may be ways to connect with the Russians, once we have made our own conclusions, in terms of cooperation, whether it is shared early warning or joint testing initiatives, which have been pursued in the NATO-Russia framework in the past.

Mr. SPRATT. With respect to strategic arms limitation talks, would defensive systems be part of that?

And, in addition, what are our objectives going into these talks? What are the broad objectives that we are seeking in terms of warhead levels and the mix of our weapons within our nuclear arsenal?

Secretary VERSHBOW. As we stressed, defensive systems are not covered by—are not going to be covered by—the START follow-on agreement. It will deal strictly with limitations on strategic offensive arms, strategic nuclear arms.

We and previous Administrations have recognized that there is a conceptual relationship between offense and defense, and there may be some reaffirmation of that principle. But that does not translate into any limitations on our ballistic missile defense systems.

To the extent that the Russians are prepared to engage in possible cooperation on missile defense, I think we would pursue that in a separate forum which has yet to be established.

But there is no linkage between limits on offensive systems and limits on defensive systems. But the limits that you have seen in the joint understanding for the START follow-on agreement reflect a range of possibilities. The specific levels still have to be negotiated.

But before we made any proposals in this negotiation, we analyzed our strategic force requirements as part of the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), which is still ongoing. As one of the initial thrusts of the NPR, we look for a strategic approach that could ensure stability at lower numbers, so that we could proceed with the START follow-on negotiations, given that the existing START Treaty expires in December.

But the proposals that we put on the table were based on the NPR analysis. It was not the other way around. And the proposals maintain our policy and strategy objectives in terms of assuring our allies, dissuading competitors, deterring potential adversaries, and defeating adversaries if deterrence fails.

So, the final result will have to be consistent with those principles as well. We are not necessarily willing to accept any number within the ranges that are in the joint understanding.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

The gentleman from Missouri, Mr. Akin.

Mr. AKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to our witnesses and your bearing with us on the questions.

I have got a couple of quick ones, yes or nos, and then I have a couple of longer ones. And, of course, we are all on the clock, so if you can help me with fairly short answers, I would appreciate it.

First, are we going to continue to train and equip the Georgian military?

Secretary VERSHBOW. Yes, we are. And in the short term, the Georgians have made an offer to send a battalion to Afghanistan starting next spring. And so, later this year, we will be engaged in helping to train that unit for——

Mr. AKIN. In that context, then. Okay. Thank you.

And then, will the U.S. support NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia?

Secretary GORDON. We continue to support their NATO aspirations, and are working with them on becoming stronger candidates.

As you know, last year NATO agreed to have commissions with both countries. And in the context of those commissions, we are

working with them to strengthen their candidacies for NATO membership.

But of course, they will only join NATO when there is a consensus in NATO that they will join.

Mr. AKIN. Got that. Good. Thank you.

These are a little bit longer questions.

You made a comment in terms of missile defense, that it is going to be based on the threat of Iran or North Korea? In that regard, are we limiting missile defense, that it is only going to be relative to two nations? Because I think my sense is that missile defense is good any time somebody lobs an ICBM at us.

So, are we, in a way, trading off some of our missile defense when you say that it is specifically connected to North Korea and Iran?

Secretary VERSHBOW. Well, I think the focus, in terms of what are the most immediate threats we see looming, are the missile programs of North Korea and Iran. And certainly, the focus in terms of European missile defense is Iran, which has tested a 2,000-kilometer, medium-range ballistic——

Mr. AKIN. We all understand that. My question is, though, we build missile defense—at least in my opinion, I vote to fund it. And I do that, because not only North Korea and Iran, but somebody else that makes some over-sized skyrocket with a nuclear weapon on it, we like to shoot it down from that country, too.

Secretary VERSHBOW. I think we are obviously trying to be prepared for any threat, anticipated or not. And of course, an accidental launch via a single missile from a country that is not a rogue state is something that we should be prepared for, as well.

Mr. AKIN. So, we are not in any way negotiating away our use of missile defense for any kind of missile that is shot at us then?

Secretary VERSHBOW. No. There is no negotiation going on that would give away our missile defense option.

Mr. AKIN. Okay. The second thing is on the limits on nuclear warheads. Almost every treaty that I know of that we ever got with the Russians, they always cheated on all of them. Do we have verification that that is not going to happen here?

Secretary VERSHBOW. That is going to be one of the many challenges in completing this treaty, and we have a very short time period to do so.

But we are going to probably use many of the verification provisions from the soon-to-be-expired START Treaty. But we may need to be more ambitious under this agreement, particularly given, you know, the margin of tolerance may be lower as you go to lower levels under these kinds of agreements.

Mr. AKIN. Because it does seem like it is a pretty hard thing to verify, whether they have got some arsenal of them now, and we do not know how many they had before, so then it makes it hard.

I guess the last thing—I have only got about a minute-and-a-half, and I was trying to be a good steward of time.

If you could, one thing that you did not include in your testimonies that is of interest, and it would probably be of interest to other members of the committee. And that would be, if you could just describe sort of in broad brush, what is the nature of the way

Putin and Russia has—you know, was 8 years ago with us—that relation degenerated to some degree.

With a new President, hopefully, we are getting kind of back on a talking—I am a big fan of the inter-military kind of things.

Could you just give us a broad brush as to where you think we are in relation with them? And that is the last of my questions. Thank you.

Secretary GORDON. Thank you.

I think I said in my opening comments that we saw the relationship that we inherited as one that was deteriorating, which, frankly, is accurate. And when the Cold War ended and the first few years after that, I think we had hopes that by now the relationship with Russia would be much different from what it is. We had hopes that by now, NATO might have—sorry, Russia—might have gotten over its aversion to NATO enlargement and been more willing to work with the West.

I think one thing that has happened, to be very brief about it——

Mr. AKIN. Was that their biggest—NATO enlargement—was that the biggest thing that rubbed them the wrong way?

Secretary GORDON. I think it stands in for a greater point, which is simply America's role in the world.

I think when the Cold War ended, the Russians believed and hoped that both sides would stand down, and we would be no greater a power than they were, and our equality would be maintained. But that, of course, was not realistic, and the United States played an important role in the world. And it frankly became the sole superpower, rather than having two superpowers.

And it has been very difficult for Russia to get used to that world. And again, I think for many Russians, it is something that they have resented. And therefore, in particular in the past few years, as high oil prices have fueled a resurgent, or had fueled a resurgence of the Russian economy, some Russians wanted to take advantage of that and do more to try to stand up to the United States.

I would add, unfortunately, the period when Russians perceived Russia to be down coincided with the period when Russian democracy was being established. And the period in which many Russians perceived Russia to be rising coincided with, in some ways, a backing off of democracy. And that, unfortunately, has led a number of Russians to equate the two, which we do not think is the case.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

The gentleman from Arkansas, Dr. Snyder.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you all for being here.

Secretary Gordon, I would just add one comment. I think, during the period in which Russia was down in the early days of the post-Cold War period, I think it is fair to say that, retrospectively, the United States clearly could have done more to help what many people perceived to be as a floundering Russian economy.

I mean, having personally been there, and I saw people out and standing on the side of the road, middle-aged women with brand new green hose. That was their pay from the factory. If they could sell it on the road, that was their payment. I mean there were real-

ly some things that we could have stepped forward on to assist them, and did not.

I wanted to ask one missile defense question.

Maybe I will direct this to you, Mr. Vershbow.

I was talking with one of my Russian friends recently, who made the point that I think most people agree with. It is that Russia has nothing to fear from any missile defense system we put in, and they know it. They know that they have nuclear missiles in places that we do not know where they are at, and that this kind of a system really is not aimed at Russia. And they know that, if we ever thought it was, it just would not be the facts of the situation.

But this man made the point, he said, "What makes us apprehensive is that there will be people in your power structure that will believe it can do more than it is capable of doing."

And we have had—you know, from their perspective, they have not agreed with all of the foreign policy decisions made in the last decade-and-a-half, and would hate to see some of these foreign policy decisions of the future based on some misbelief that some of this limited system could somehow allow for some American action that we might not take otherwise, if—anyway, I probably made the point.

How do you respond to that kind of—that perspective?

Secretary VERSHBOW. That is a very good question, Congressman.

And I think you are correct that, objectively speaking, most Russians—particularly their experts who really know the capabilities of our system—recognize that it is not a threat to the Russian strategic deterrent, as they claim. In fact, it is not solely because they have mobile systems and submarine launched systems that could be survivable.

But actually, if you look at the geography of our systems, if we go forward with the site in Poland, are not physically capable of intercepting the vast majority of Russian strategic missiles heading toward the United States, because those go over the North Pole. And our missiles would be a day late and a dollar short.

So, they are, clearly, optimized to deal with threats such as those from Iran, from the south. And hopefully, through this joint threat assessment, we can begin to chip away at some of the Russian misperceptions.

But sometimes we hear that, well, there are only 10 missiles today, but tomorrow we could wake and there will be 1,000. But still, there are defensive systems in a position that, even if there were more than 10——

Dr. SNYDER. Well, I am running out of time, and I have a second question.

But I mean, they do not believe that, no matter how many missiles we put in that area, that it would be a threat to their ability to overwhelm us. But it still deals with the issue, their apprehension, that there may be people that replace Admiral Winnefeld, that will actually think it can do more than it is capable of.

And maybe I will just leave it as a point to be made. It is a more difficult kind of reassurance to give.

Secretary VERSHBOW. I would certainly agree with you that those kinds of views exist within the Russian elite. There is a tremendous amount of paranoia and worst-case assessments.

And so, we have to continue to chip away at this through our dialogue, and by trying to bring the Russians into the architecture to some degree and make this a cooperative venture.

Dr. SNYDER. It may be helpful for people like you to remind all of us that, in fact, that system does not have the ability to do to anything to Russian systems.

My final question—I am running out of time, Professor Vershbow, so I will direct it to you—where do you think we are right now with regard to our Russian language speaking skills within the Foreign Service?

And Secretary Gordon, if you have any thoughts, too, as far as Foreign Service officers with Russian language skills. What is our current need, gap, and where we are with getting the number of Foreign Service officers with Russian language skills?

Secretary VERSHBOW. Well, my impression is that we are doing pretty well. And the State Department has a very good Russian language program, which, through an intensive course of 10 months, does prepare people to operate professionally in Russian—in Moscow and in some other posts in the former Soviet Union where Russian is still used.

But we are seeing fewer and fewer people coming out of the universities having studied Russian. It is not as popular as it used to be.

But in terms of the overall deficits in language skills, I think we are still more worried about Chinese and Arabic speakers, Farsi speakers, than we are about Russian speakers.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And Admiral Winnefeld, I want to thank you for your service, supporting our ground troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I also want to point out, as we are discussing Russia, that 20 years ago this summer, no one projected that in about three months that the Berlin Wall would collapse. There were no projections, truly, of the extraordinary and wonderful reunification of Germany. The projections of Ronald Reagan, that the Soviet Union would end up in the ash heap of history, did come to fruition.

I am an optimist. And I am really hopeful and I believe, that through mutual contacts, freedom, democracy, free markets will prevail. And I have visited Russia a number of times. Each time I am impressed by the friendship that the Russian people have for the American people.

And I have worked very closely promoting the new Rotary Clubs across the country giving opportunity for Russians to interact with people around the world, chambers of commerce. And then I am particularly interested in military-to-military contacts, so that there are not misunderstandings. This is mutually beneficial to Russia, to America.

And so, Admiral, you have mentioned this. Could you go a little bit further on specific contacts that we have?

Admiral WINNEFELD. Sir, I would be happy to.

One of the key points that you raise is the importance of people meeting people. And that is why earlier this year, when the tensions really had not subsided as much as they have to the point they are today, we made the difficult decision to allow the Russians to come over and participate in what we call the Harvard generals program, where a number of them come over and are able to visit the United States.

They attend Harvard for a couple of weeks, and it is really just an exchange. And in fact, it is really just Russian generals going to Harvard for two weeks, giving them a great opportunity to see America, what we are like and to perhaps put some of their predispositions behind them.

And we carry that through in our military-to-military relationship any way that we can. And I can list some of these events for you.

Obviously, the joint staff talks that I mentioned in my opening statement will occur this October, we are hopeful. And that would lay the groundwork for a lot of the planning that we would do to really get the detail into the relationship that we are talking about.

We are hopeful that their chief of defense or some representative will show up at the Pacific Commanders Conference that he is holding for all Asian area chiefs of defense, and that would be a great thing for them to be a part of. They participate in the share awareness and understanding and deconfliction piracy pieces.

So, they are out there operating with us, and they see U.S. officers working with other countries' officers in a very cooperative, collegial way. And they want to be a part of that. They want to act like that when they see it.

We will have a counter-hijacking exercise with them, Navy staff talks. The International Sea Power Symposium up in Newport, they will attend. And Naval War College and Russian Naval Academy exchanges, where for a couple of weeks they will have young people coming over.

And these people are going to grow up to be leaders someday, particularly if they have the credibility that comes with perhaps having visited the United States for a while.

Our port visits are very important to us. We have had two to Vladivostok in just the last couple of months. The Russian Military Academy is going to have an exchange with Fort Leavenworth. The air staff talks are going to occur.

We are going to try to set up a number of conferences at the Marshall Center in Europe. West Point and Russian Ground Forces Academy cadet exchange, which is not a full-year program. Again, it is one of these 2-week things.

The Strategic Command Deterrence Symposium, so they can get a sense for how we view deterrence, and perhaps the missile defense may be not part of that as much as they may think. And then the EUCOM Colonels Working Group, where they roll up their sleeves and get down to what the program would be for next year.

And we are hopeful that all of this will happen in this calendar year. So, that is a pretty ambitious program. And we are hoping to expand that cooperation into the next year.

And our challenge is always with the Russian military in doing these sorts of things, they have, believe it or not, a more cumbersome bureaucracy than we do. Just to get decisions made on who can show up for a conference is a challenge.

And that is why I speak of percolating this trust up through their ranks, so that it is a little easier for them to make these kinds of decisions, a little more natural, a little less suspicion and distrust, so we can expand this kind of cooperative activity.

Mr. WILSON. Well, I really appreciate it. You have taken virtually all of my time, but that is good, because this is good, people-to-people contact.

And I just want to commend Secretary Vershbow for your service as ambassador to Moscow. You know the beautiful culture and how we should be working together. We have a great shared culture.

But thank you, and I appreciate the opportunity to be with you today. Thank you for your service.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Shea-Porter, please.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Thank you.

Mr. Gordon, you said that the U.S. and Russia affirmed their commitment to increase assistance provided to the government of Afghanistan developing the capabilities of the Afghan National Army and police.

Now, I was there in May, and I know that Afghanistan has a lot of problems—corruption, lack of trained personnel, et cetera.

But what do you perceive the role of Russia to be there? To do exactly what?

Secretary GORDON. We would be happy for Russian assistance in developing the sort of stable Afghanistan that we are trying to seek.

The statement that you are alluding to there was actually a Russian initiative. They came to us and said, "We have a common interest in Afghanistan. We would like to help your efforts to stabilize Afghanistan. And we would like to show that we have this common interest."

So, they proposed a joint statement on Afghanistan along the lines that you cited from. And we were more than happy to agree with that, because Russia—as I believe one of my colleagues alluded to earlier—has the same interests that we do in stopping extremism and drug-running out of Afghanistan. And if they can help us deal with that, sharing intelligence and dealing with those responsible, then we welcome it.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Well, they had many years there, as you know. And I am not sure that the Afghans would welcome this.

Are you talking about a physical presence there? Or are you just talking about providing monetary help, personnel? Could you tell me what you see their role as?

Secretary GORDON. Well, we will have to look at what role could be constructive. A physical presence is probably unlikely for the reasons that you say.

But there are all sorts of porous and dangerous borders, and people coming back and forth. And the Russians do have some intelligence on Islamic extremists who go back and forth to Afghanistan. So, that is the type of help that I am referring to.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Do you see them as training the Afghan police or the Afghan military?

Secretary VERSHBOW. Congresswoman, I think you are right that a military presence by the Russians is probably not something that the majority of the people in Afghanistan would be welcoming.

But they have participated in some counternarcotics programs, including setting up an office of their federal narcotics service in Moscow to help coordinate assistance. And they are doing some training of Afghan police at a center in Moscow, at Domodedovo, which has been going on in the NATO-Russia framework.

So, their contributions may be small and narrowly focused, but they are meaningful, and we think more should be encouraged. But I think they have done some infrastructure projects, as well, and repairing some Soviet era bridges and tunnels that are improving access for commercial goods in and out of Afghanistan.

So, again, military presence is not something we are talking about, but more on the civilian side.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Now, as they train the Afghan National Army and police, we have different philosophies very often.

So, what kind of control would we have? How would we know for sure that what the Afghan military was learning was something that we thought was appropriate in terms of, say, democracy or the way that you treat the civilians, et cetera?

I just want to know what our thinking is on that and how hands-on they will actually be.

Secretary VERSHBOW. I do not know enough about the details of these programs. We will have to get back to you on that.

But I know that the terms of reference were drawn up pretty carefully by NATO and Russia within the NATO-Russia Council. So, I think we have—I am sure we have—a good idea of exactly how the Russian trainers are operating and what kind of skills they are focusing on.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. I would appreciate it.

Secretary VERSHBOW. In fact, during the summit, some of our delegation had a chance to visit this training center. So, there is good transparency.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. And I would appreciate it, if there is further information, that you could share it with me.

Thank you, and I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentlelady.

The gentleman from Colorado, Mr. Lamborn.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

For Mr. Gordon, I understand the department's Nuclear Posture Review is not expected to be complete until the end of the year. According to an online DOD terms of reference factsheet dated June 2nd of this year, the 2009 Nuclear Posture Review, quote, will establish U.S. nuclear deterrence policy, strategy and force posture for the next 5 to 10 years, and will provide a basis for the negotiation of a follow-on agreement to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

Now, with that in mind, how can the Administration or the department commit to specific nuclear force reductions prior to the conclusion of the NPR? Isn't that putting the cart before the horse?

Secretary VERSHBOW. Congressman, as the Pentagon representative, let me respond.

We are certainly putting the NPR first, and the START negotiations second. And within the NPR, we are looking at a whole range of alternative strategic approaches.

But in view of the fact that the existing START Treaty expires in December, we made it an initial priority within the NPR coming up with a strategic approach that could ensure stability at somewhat lower numbers, so that we could engage in the START follow-on negotiations and try to complete it by December.

But the alternative approach, which is the basis for the proposals that we have put on the table, has been judged within the NPR to maintain our policy and strategy objectives of assuring our allies, dissuading all competitors, deterring potential adversaries, and defeating those adversaries if deterrence fails.

So the NPR goes on, and its conclusions will be released later in the year. And continuing analysis is going on in terms of longer term scenarios, in which we might, in a follow-on to the follow-on treaty, consider even deeper cuts.

But we did not put the cart before the horse. We have done the analysis within the NPR process before putting any proposals regarding the warheads levels or the delivery vehicles——

Mr. LAMBORN. Okay. If I hear you correctly, you have said that you have agreed to lower numbers. You used that term, lower numbers. And yet, the NPR is not done yet.

Secretary VERSHBOW. Again, lower numbers than in the START or the Moscow treaty, but numbers which we believe can fulfill our deterrence objectives during the term that this new treaty will be in effect, a 10-year period.

Mr. LAMBORN. Well, I guess I see a contradiction there. But let me ask a follow-on question.

I am deeply concerned that in considering deep reductions—possibly deep reductions—in our strategic delivery vehicles from 1,200 down to a level as low as 500. And my concern is because the bipartisan Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States, led by Drs. Perry and Schlesinger, believe that, quote, the triad of strategic nuclear delivery systems should be maintained. And my concern is that levels as low as 500 could threaten the triad.

Isn't there a contradiction between maintaining our nuclear triad and reducing delivery systems to the 500 level?

For anyone of you.

Admiral WINNEFELD. I would tell you that the NPR is considering all of that in great rigor and detail, and that, as Secretary Vershbow mentioned, we advanced the analysis on that to inform the START negotiation process. And it would be, of course, inappropriate to get into the details of the START negotiation process or the details of the NPR at that point. But I can assure you, the analysis is rigorous.

And I would also suggest that, whenever you see a band presented in a document, it is generally because one side is sort of on one end of that band, and the other side is on the other end.

So, we are really looking at this responsibly. We are looking very closely. The triad has been a strength of our nuclear deterrent for

many, many years, and it would be unlikely that we would consider, you know, threatening the fundamental nature of what our triad is and how it is a force deterrence.

But again, all this and the analysis has advanced. It is rigorous. I would tell you the NPR is the most advanced of all the studies we are doing right now, because we knew we needed to get it done. And there was already a lot of pre-existing analytical detail that we leveraged, that has been done over the years and very recently.

So, as worm's eye view of the apple here, I am very confident that it is a healthy process.

Mr. LAMBORN. Okay. I appreciate those answers.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

The gentleman from Rhode Island, Mr. Langevin.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, I want to thank you for your testimony here today, and thank you for your service to our country.

I was in an Intelligence Committee meeting at the start of this, so I apologize if my question has already been addressed.

But for Secretary Vershbow, the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration and DOD's Cooperative Threat Reduction Program have generally enjoyed cooperation, access and cost-sharing issues with regard to nonproliferation efforts in Russia.

Could you elaborate on the successes and the challenges of these cooperative efforts, and kind of give us an update on where we are and, say, what is still left undone?

Secretary VERSHBOW. Okay. Well, I will give you the general answer, Congressman.

I am not in the office that is responsible for those programs, but I think we have made enormous progress since those programs were initiated in the immediate years following the end of the Cold War. And I visited many of the sites when I was ambassador, in terms of creating better security at the Russian nuclear facilities, helping now begin the destruction of the Russian chemical weapon stocks at the Shchuchye facility, which I think began operating this year.

We have basically completed most of the major infrastructure projects in terms of storage security upgrades that were envisaged by the program. And we are now beginning to broaden the focus of the CTR program to address problems in some other countries. And in this regard, the Russians are now becoming a partner and contributing even some of their own resources to these programs.

So, that is, I think, the best I can give you today, Congressman. I do not have all the chapter and verse on the state of play on some of these programs.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you.

For Secretary Gordon and Admiral Winnefeld, with Iran's recent satellite launch and ongoing development of its nuclear program, the threat to regional stability obviously continues to grow. This threat obviously affects not only the Middle East, but Europe and Asia, as well. Russian arms transfers and nuclear cooperation with Iran are also considered destabilizing by many countries in the Middle East and elsewhere in the international community.

How does Russia's relationship with Iran affect its ties with such regional powers as Israel, Saudi Arabia and Iraq? And are there more areas for cooperation with the Russians that we have not yet explored?

Secretary GORDON. First I would simply say we share your concern about the potential proliferation threat from Iran. And as I noted earlier, there was probably no subject that President Obama raised and discussed more intensively in Moscow than this one.

You ask how it affects, if I understood correctly, Russia's relations with other powers in the region. And I think it is accurate to say that we are not the only country in the world concerned about Russian cooperation with Iran, whether it be arms sales or nuclear cooperation.

The countries you mentioned, all of those—Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Israel, and others in the Gulf and elsewhere—are very concerned about a potential Iranian nuclear weapon and concerned about any country, including Russia, helping them. So, I do think that Russians know and should know that there are consequences to any relationship with Iran that it might have.

As I said earlier, I think we have seen signs of cooperation with Russia on this issue, and then other areas where they have been less helpful. And we are obviously doing all we can to move them back towards the former category.

I am sorry. There was a last element of your question that I——

Mr. LANGEVIN. Well, can you elaborate on the first part, though? I want to know, have we seen any tangible fallout from Russia's continued cooperation with Iran with respect to how they interact with other nations in the Middle East?

Secretary GORDON. Well, not dramatically, because other nations, like we, are watching very carefully what Russia does. And no doubt, certain Russian actions would provoke a real problem in their relationship with those countries or with us.

But I think Russia has refrained from moving forward with what would be really considered more destabilizing arms transfers to Iran, or steps in the nuclear area that would be provocative to us and others.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Before my time runs out, the second half of my question. Are there areas of cooperation with the Russians that have not been explored?

Secretary GORDON. We are constantly asking ourselves how to best work with the Russians.

Are there any that have not been explored? Not that we are aware of. But obviously, we have not had total success on this issue, so we need to keep doing whatever we can to try to get the Russians where we are.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. McKeon and, I believe, Mr. Shuster have additional questions.

Mr. McKeon, the floor is yours.

Mr. MCKEON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mine is just a short follow-up.

If the Administration does not intend to—and this came up in earlier questions—to link missile defense with START, then why

include a provision in the joint understanding to address, and I quote, the interrelationship of strategic offensive and strategic defensive arms?

Secretary GORDON. The President addressed this issue quite clearly in Moscow.

The provision, the reference that you allude to, is actually a standard reference in previous arms control agreements as well. It is in the START agreement. It is in the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) agreement.

And it acknowledges, as Assistant Secretary Vershbow suggested earlier, that we do accept that there is some theoretical, conceptual relationship at some level between offensive weapons and defensive weapons.

What the President made quite clear in Moscow, however, is that, A, the START follow-on agreement is only about offensive weapons; and, B, the type of defenses we are talking about in Europe are just not relevant to the types of numbers we are looking at in an arms control agreement with Russia.

We are talking in terms of European missile defense about sites, as discussed earlier, that could deal with a handful of missiles coming from a country like Iran. That in no way threatens the numbers that, even at the lower end of the spectrum, that we are talking about from Russia.

So, again, the President was quite clear with the Russians on this, that even if this follow-on agreement should include a provision talking about this potential conceptual relationship, as previous strategic arms limitations agreements have done, it is not relevant to our discussion about European missile defense. And we are quite clear about that. And it will not change between now and when the treaty is negotiated.

Mr. MCKEON. And you are confident that, even though we put it in there, we understand that it is not going to be part of it, that the Russians have the same understanding?

Secretary GORDON. I can only speak for our side, and can reassert that the President made that quite clear.

Mr. MCKEON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Shuster, wrap it up.

Mr. SHUSTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just back to Georgia for one final question to the admiral.

I wondered if you might talk a little bit about the training and equipping of the Georgian forces. Many are concerned that we are not doing enough, and that they believe that Russia is not done in Georgia, and they are going to wait for another opportunity.

So, can we do more to train and equip them to deter the Russians from making another incursion deeper into Georgia?

Admiral WINNEFELD. I would like to give you a summary of what we are doing.

We have recently concluded a couple of exercises with them. One is—and you may well be aware of these, but I will mention them anyway—Cooperative Longbow and Cooperative Lancer. And Cooperative Longbow was an exercise—multinational brigade land staff, sort of a staff ex, if you will, a command post exercise. And it also

involved air integration training with the Georgians, which is something that they definitely needed.

A lot of participants—NATO countries and several other partner countries, including Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia—and I won't list them all. But it was a good, successful exercise.

And then, that was followed by Cooperative Lancer, which was a live-fire exercise with many of the same players to promote interoperability with Partnership for Peace countries, and the like.

And it goes without saying that whenever we do an exercise like this—and this was sort of a crisis response exercise—that it is going to improve the Georgian military. And our principal focus right now is on organization and training of that military. EUCOM has done an assessment, has looked at where their shortfalls are in that area, and we are trying to address them.

At the same time, as Ambassador Vershbow mentioned, I believe, they are going to deploy a battalion to Afghanistan. And we are going to help them train for that deployment.

Now, this is a counterinsurgency operation. But again, it goes without saying, that any exposure they have to our tactics, techniques and procedures, writ large, is going to help their military become more proficient. And this is probably a two-year deployment that they are going to take in six-month chunks, so that a lot of Georgians will be exposed to how we operate on the ground.

So, I think, in general, they are getting a lot of exposure to us, and it is going to raise them up as that progresses.

Mr. SHUSTER. What about the equipment? Is there anything we can——

Admiral WINNEFELD. The equipment—I do not believe that we are—we did return their equipment from Iraq, as they requested. And I believe we are still exploring what the nature of our equipment support to the Georgians would be.

Mr. SHUSTER. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. If there are no further questions, let me thank you gentlemen for this very excellent hearing. It has been very enlightening, and we appreciate it. We look forward to seeing you again.

The meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:11 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

JULY 30, 2009

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

JULY 30, 2009

Testimony of Ambassador Alexander R. Vershbow
Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs
Department of Defense
July 30, 2009
House Armed Services Committee

Chairman Skelton, Ranking Member McKeon, Members of this Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the U.S. relationship with Russia and implications for U.S. and transatlantic security. Russia has been a life-long interest for me, since I began studying the Russian language in high school. As a foreign service officer at what was then the Soviet desk, as the U.S. Ambassador to Russia in 2001-2005, and now most recently as Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, I have learned that getting the U.S-Russian relationship right remains one of our highest priorities – and one of our biggest challenges.

That makes it especially meaningful to report that recent developments in U.S.-Russian relations present new opportunities for cooperation with Moscow to enhance U.S. and European security. It is certainly encouraging to see improvement in the tone of our dialogue, and we are building on this positive momentum to collaborate in areas where our national interests coincide, such as non-proliferation, arms control, and promoting security and stability in Afghanistan, among other issues.

Although we have pressed the "reset" button, this does not mean we will shy away from dealing with Russia on areas where we disagree, such as Georgia or NATO enlargement. The President and Vice President have made it clear that we support Georgia's territorial integrity and its and other countries' rights to enter into alliances of their choosing, and we refuse to recognize spheres of privileged interests. We also have frank discussions with the Russians on human rights and democracy. The challenge is to find a way to not only work cooperatively in those areas where our interests coincide, but also continue to

engage in those other, more contentious areas without artificial linkages. It is with this backdrop that we seek to establish a more solid basis for sustained engagement with Russia.

Let me begin by taking a few minutes to highlight some major areas of common interest where we believe Russia can work with us as a contributor to our mutual security, and then identify a couple of issues about which we remain concerned.

I.) RUSSIA AS SECURITY PARTNER: AREAS OF MUTUAL INTEREST

This month's summit in Moscow was far more productive than we had expected. I can report firsthand that the change in tone was striking. The mood was positive and discussions were substantive, opening the way to concrete items such as an agreement allowing for transit of troops and lethal equipment through Russia to Afghanistan, a Joint Understanding setting out a framework for negotiations on a new START Follow-on treaty, a framework agreement allowing for resumption of military-to-military ties, a Memorandum of Understanding on health cooperation, and creation of a bilateral Presidential Commission. We also issued several joint statements establishing a broad agenda for cooperation on a range of national security priorities: Afghanistan, nuclear security, and missile defense. I'll review a few of the areas of progress.

AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan is at the front and center of our security agenda. Russia is also aware that a stable, democratic Afghanistan is in its national security interests. Narcotics trafficking and the spread of violent extremism pose security risks for Russia that Moscow knows it cannot ignore.

President Medvedev has stated on numerous occasions that Afghanistan is our "common cause." Earlier this year, we began to take advantage of a NATO-Russia arrangement that allows for the transit of non-lethal equipment and supplies through Russia. At the

two presidents' April 1 meeting in London, President Medvedev offered to allow transit of lethal material through Russian territory. In Moscow, Bill Burns, the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, and Foreign Minister Lavrov signed an agreement that will permit transit of troops and lethal materiel through Russian airspace. The agreement permits up to 4,500 military and unlimited commercial flights each year, and will yield significant savings. The Russians agreed to absorb the cost of air navigation fees for our military flights associated with the agreement as a contribution to the international effort to stabilize Afghanistan. The agreement will diversify the crucial supply routes to Afghanistan, reduce transit times and fuel usage, and complement agreements we have made with others in the region. We will continue to use all available routes to Afghanistan and not become overly dependent on any one of them. It should take no more than 60 days to implement the agreement.

President Medvedev has also offered more direct contributions to the stability and security of Afghanistan. To better coordinate our efforts, we will expand our cooperation within the U.S.-Russia Counter-Terrorism Working Group. In Moscow, the U.S. delegation had the opportunity to view a training center at Domodedovo, where Afghan counternarcotics police officers had been trained through the NATO-Russia Council Counter-Narcotics Project. The program has been successful, and we are thinking together about how to get more initiatives like this in place.

Moving forward, I do see Afghanistan as an area where the Russians seem to be sincere in their offers to assist. Russia has become an important player in the international effort in Afghanistan, contributing toward improvement of infrastructure, supporting political processes, and offering support for the Afghan military and police. The stakes are high, as failure in Afghanistan could have a direct impact on the illegal narcotics flowing to Russia and stability in regions like the Northern Caucasus.

START FOLLOW-ON

One of the President's main goals for the Summit was to reach a framework agreement for a new START Follow-on treaty that laid out parameters and concrete numbers. This is precisely what we accomplished in the Joint Understanding signed by the two presidents in Moscow. The Joint Understanding establishes for both sides the objective of reducing and limiting their strategic offensive arms so that seven years after entry into force of the treaty and thereafter, the limits will be in the range of 500-1100 for strategic delivery vehicles, and in the range of 1500-1675 for their associated warheads. The treaty will also include effective verification measures drawn from the experience in implementing START. While specific ceilings remain to be negotiated, these ranges already represent reductions from the maximum levels allowed under the expiring START Treaty's 1600 delivery vehicles and Moscow Treaty's 2200 warheads. I'll defer to my colleague from State on the details of the START Follow-on treaty, but will briefly share a few key points here:

- It will combine the predictability of START and the flexibility of the Moscow Treaty, borrowing from the best elements of START on definitions, data exchanges, notifications, eliminations, inspections and verification procedures, as well as confidence-building and transparency measures.

- The Treaty will be in effect for ten years, unless it is superseded before that time by a subsequent treaty on reductions of strategic offensive arms.

- The Presidents also agreed to direct their negotiators to finish their work on the treaty soon so that they may sign and submit it for ratification in their respective countries.

In President Obama's speech at Moscow's New Economic School, he reiterated America's commitment "to stopping nuclear proliferation, and ultimately seeking a world without nuclear weapons." The steps initiated at this month's summit represent an

important demonstration of U.S. and Russian leadership in fulfilling their obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and will contribute to a more successful 2010 NPT Review Conference.

NUCLEAR SECURITY COOPERATION

Another high-priority issue for the President at the Summit was ensuring the security of nuclear materials and facilities, and strengthening our cooperation with the Russians to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. President Obama and President Medvedev had lengthy discussions on how to deal with the immediate challenges posed by Iran and North Korea. They agreed to broaden our bilateral cooperation to increase the level of security of nuclear facilities worldwide, and to take steps to strengthen the global non-proliferation regime. We also remain committed to implementing the Plutonium Disposition Agreement, through which we will dispose of 34 metric tons each of weapons-grade plutonium. We believe the Russians are open to more significant cooperation in this area to ensure that additional countries in the Middle East and Asia do not seek nuclear weapons.

MISSILE DEFENSE

Although missile defense remains a difficult issue, we were able to reach agreement with Russia on a joint statement on missile defense cooperation. In the statement, we agreed to conduct a Joint Ballistic Missile Threat Assessment, which will be primarily focused on Iran and North Korea. A U.S. team is traveling to Moscow this week to begin the process. We believe that the Threat Assessment will offer an effective mechanism for narrowing our differences on the immediacy of the threats, and thereby provide a foundation for expanding our cooperation in this area, both bilaterally and through the NATO-Russia Council.

In the Joint Statement, we also pledged to redouble our efforts to open the long-planned Joint Data Exchange Center in Moscow. This center, jointly commanded by U.S. and

Russian military, will allow us to share missile launch data with each other and reduce misunderstandings that might arise over a test launch, an unauthorized, accidental launch, or other benign missile launches. We believe that through this center we could also exchange data from third-country launches, information that would be of obvious benefit to both parties.

The Department is taking a comprehensive look at our plans for European ballistic missile defense as a part of the ongoing Ballistic Missile Defense Review. President Obama committed to completing the review before the end of the summer and we will look to the outcome of that process to guide our next steps. We made clear to our Russian counterparts that our decision on missile defense sites in Europe will be determined by the threat from Iran, the technical feasibility of different missile defense options, and the cost. As we move forward with our review, the steps initiated at the Moscow Summit will provide an excellent opportunity to engage Russia on cooperation on a missile defense system that could protect U.S., European, and Russian populations from nuclear and ballistic missile threats from Iran and elsewhere.

NATO-RUSSIA RELATIONS

After almost a year-long break in relations in the wake of events in Georgia last August, the NATO-Russia Council resumed its activity with a ministerial-level meeting on June 27 in Corfu, Greece. The meeting did not lead to a formal agreement on a way ahead, but we were able to identify some concrete areas of cooperation.

Specifically, NATO-Russia Council Members agreed on the need to resume military-to-military contacts and broader cooperation, specifically in the stabilization of Afghanistan, counter-terrorism efforts, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, maritime cooperation on counter-piracy and search-and-rescue at sea, and responding to civil emergencies. The discussion was frank and constructive, and members agreed that due to the important role the NATO-Russia Council plays in Euro-Atlantic security, its activities should continue even during times of disagreement. NATO Secretary General Jaap de

Hoop Scheffer has highlighted NATO-Russia relations as a key issue to address in NATO's new Strategic Concept. The Alliance looks forward to continuing to engage Russia as we develop the new Strategic Concept.

II. AREAS OF CONCERN

Even though Russian conventional forces are far smaller than what constituted the Soviet armed forces, they maintain a comparative advantage over other armed forces in Europe and have embarked on the most serious defense reforms since the end of the Cold War. We will need to manage our disagreements in areas such as energy security, NATO enlargement, missile defense, the sovereignty of countries in the post-Soviet space, and Russia's backsliding on democracy and human rights issues.

REGIONAL SECURITY

We reject anachronistic 19th century thinking about spheres of influence or privileged interests. We will continue to support the sovereignty, with all the rights and responsibilities that word implies, of all states regardless of geographic location. We continue to believe that stable democracies on Russia's borders contribute not only to Europe's security, but to Russia's as well. In that vein, we stand by our commitment to continue to strongly support programs aimed at building partner capacity and promoting security cooperation with our partners in the region. These will not suffer due to the "reset" in relations with Russia. Good relations with Russia and its neighbors are not mutually exclusive, as President Obama made clear during his meetings with President Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin, and that the U.S. supports Georgian and Ukrainian sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity.

During his visits to both countries last week, Vice President Biden reaffirmed this support. In Tbilisi, he stated that he had returned to Georgia "to send an unequivocal, clear, simple message to all who will listen, that America stands with you at this moment and will continue to stand with you." To this end, the U.S. is implementing the U.S.-

Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership, and will engage with Georgia to assist it in completing the democratic, economic, and security reforms necessary for Euro-Atlantic integration. Together with our European Allies, we will continue to press Russia to honor its commitments under the September 8, 2008 Medvedev-Sarkozy Ceasefire Agreement, and will urge both Georgia and Russia to refrain from destabilizing actions.

The Vice President's visit also underscores the U.S. commitment to Ukraine, an important partner whose integration into European and Euro-Atlantic institutions would advance our vision of a wider and more stable Europe. As a distinctive partner of NATO through the NATO-Ukraine Commission, and as an active NATO Partnership for Peace nation participating in NATO-led operations in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Iraq, Ukraine has demonstrated its commitment to regional and global security; but, it also has substantial work ahead of it to complete the political, economic, and security reforms necessary for Euro-Atlantic integration. The Department will continue to support Ukraine's efforts to transform and restructure its military into a modern, professional and NATO-interoperable force.

In addition to supporting Ukraine and Georgia in their objective of integration in Western institutions, the United States remains committed to the safety and security of those states already in NATO. We understand there is growing anxiety among some members of the NATO Alliance – particularly those in Central and Eastern Europe – but U.S. commitments to Europe's security remain firm. Article 5 continues to serve as the cornerstone of the Alliance, which is a theme that will no doubt be highlighted in NATO's new Strategic Concept.

In June, Greece hosted a ministerial meeting in Corfu of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to discuss ways to strengthen European security. We remain ready to continue our dialogue with Russia in the OSCE about its ideas for a new European security architecture, although we remain committed to working through existing structures and mechanisms for joint cooperation on European security rather than

creating new ones. We will need to continue to engage because, as last August's events show, we need to make existing mechanisms more effective in preventing conflicts.

CONVENTIONAL ARMED FORCES IN EUROPE (CFE)

The Administration is concerned that, since December 12 2007, Russia has continued unilateral "suspension" of its legal obligations under the CFE Treaty. The U.S. is committed to cooperative security and fulfillment of international agreements, as well as the importance of the confidence that results from military transparency and predictability. Because of this, the U.S. continues to fully implement the CFE Treaty. The U.S. continues to urge Russia to work cooperatively with the U.S. and other concerned CFE States Parties to reach agreement on the basis of the parallel actions package so that together we can bring the Adapted CFE Treaty forward for ratification and preserve the benefits of this landmark regime.

III. WAY FORWARD

The signals from Moscow since the summit have thus far been largely positive. We expect that in developing a more formal institutional underpinning for the relationship, a more stable and substantive partnership will mature.

BILATERAL COMMISSION

I think one of the problems of the recent years in our management of U.S.-Russian relations was that we treated Russia largely as a function of our policy on other issues – Afghanistan, the Middle East, counter-terrorism or energy – rather than focusing on the relationship as a whole. To provide more strategic direction, the Presidents decided to establish a bilateral commission which will govern all aspects of the relationship. President Obama and President Medvedev will co-chair the Commission with Secretary of State Clinton and Foreign Minister Lavrov serving as coordinators. More structured relationships may help us to maintain momentum, and avoid misunderstandings.

MILITARY-TO-MILITARY COOPERATION

Good relations between militaries form a sound building block for good relations between countries and we are working with the Russian MOD and General Staff to improve on the military-to-military programs we had before they were suspended as a result of the war in Georgia. During the summit, Admiral Mullen and General Makarov signed a new Framework on Military-to-Military Cooperation. This Framework, based on principles of pragmatism, parity, reciprocity, balance and synchronization with NATO, will change the nature of the relationship. It will set conditions that raise military cooperation to a new level and deepen mutual understanding between our respective armed forces.

We also agreed on a work plan which will include nearly 20 exchanges and operational events before the end of the year, including a strategic discussion between the U.S. Joint Staff and the Russian General Staff, orientation for Russian military cadets at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, planning for a joint exercise to respond to a hijacked aircraft in national and international airspace, visit of the faculty of the Russian Combined Arms Academy to the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center at Ft. Leavenworth, and a naval war game conducted by the Kuznetsov Naval Academy and the U.S. Naval War College. In addition, the U.S. European Command and the Russian Ministry of Defense agreed to meet and develop a robust and more ambitious work plan for 2010.

CONCLUSION

The Presidents' April meeting in London and their July summit mark what I believe can be a significant turning point in U.S.-Russia relations. The Corfu Ministerial Council in June offers a similar example of the restart in NATO-Russia relations. The Administration is under no illusion that this will be easy. Nor do we believe that any kind of strategic partnership will develop overnight. We do believe that improved relations between the U.S. and Russia, which had started on a downward trend long before hitting a nadir due to the August 2008 conflict in Georgia, can help us meet the range of 21st

century challenges we face today. This policy acknowledges that Russia is still important as a potential partner that is on the front lines of most of the main security problems we have to deal with.

We set a very ambitious agenda for the Moscow Summit and made significant progress on a number of important issues. We are optimistic that the agreements that arose from the Summit will assist our efforts broadly, from reducing strategic weapons stockpiles to supporting the war in Afghanistan. Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts here today, and I look forward to your questions.

Written Testimony of Vice Admiral James A. Winnefeld
Joint Staff Director for Strategic Plans and Policy (J-5)
Department of Defense
July 30, 2009
House Armed Services Committee
"July 6-8, 2009 Moscow Summit"

Chairman Skelton, Ranking Member McKeon, Committee Members, thank you for inviting me to address the Committee today. I concur with Ambassador Vershbow's testimony and will reinforce his substantive points by focusing my comments on the military aspects of the Russia relationship, especially with respect to how we plan to move forward in creating a more constructive, working relationship. This remains a critical security relationship to manage well, especially in light of the destructive capacity of both our nuclear arsenals.

We have witnessed dramatic changes in our interaction with Russia, beginning a year ago with the invasion of Georgia and the resulting degradation of both bilateral and NATO-Russia relations. I want to emphasize that during several pivotal points in the Russia-Georgia conflict, the only constructive contact between our governments was the military-to-military channel. Indeed, back in October of 2008, I was privileged to accompany Admiral Mullen when he met his General Staff counterpart (General Makarov) in Helsinki. I was able to observe first-hand the critical necessity of maintaining a strong military relationship that can aid in the resolution of a crisis. Moreover, it represented a small but important step in reinforcing our working relationship as a foundation for future progress.

More recently, we have found a willingness on both sides to "reset" this vital relationship. We recognize the prospect that there may not be a smooth path towards greater partnership and cooperation. However, allowing our relationship to be defined only by the areas where our interests diverge limits the potential benefit of cooperating where our strategic interests overlap. We are committed to a course change–which began with the Presidents' meeting at the G-20 in April, was further reinforced at the July Summit, and will continue to require focus, effort and discipline.

At this juncture, I would like to address in more detail those pertaining to military matters: specifically, military-to-military cooperation, Afghanistan, the START Follow-on Agreement, and the Joint Data Exchange Center.

Military-to Military Cooperation

As you are aware, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mullen recently visited Moscow twice, once in late June for discussions with Russian Chief of the General Staff Makarov, and again in July in support of the Presidential Summit. A key element of these discussions was rejuvenating the military channel of communication with frank exchanges on issues ranging from U.S. – Russia military cooperation to regional challenges, counter-piracy and missile defense. Indeed, positive relations between our militaries form a sound building block for good relations between our countries and we are working with the Russian Ministry of Defense and General Staff to improve on the military-to-military programs we had before they were suspended as a result of the conflict in Georgia.

During the summit, Admiral Mullen and General Makarov signed a new Framework on Military-to-Military Cooperation. This Framework is our combined vision to change the nature of our relationship, based on the principles of pragmatism, parity, reciprocity, balance, and synchronization with NATO. It will set conditions that raise military cooperation to a new level and deepen mutual understanding between our respective armed forces. Our interactions with Russia military officers will deepen their understanding of our society, and lay the foundation for future relationships such as that enjoyed by Admiral Mullen and General Makarov.

Admiral Mullen and General Makarov are also committed to leading the military-to-military working group of the Presidential Bilateral Commission to ensure that cooperative endeavors in the military realm remain on track and continue in the strategic direction the Presidents mandated.

The 2009 Work Plan approved by Admiral Mullen and General Makarov encompasses nearly 20 exchanges and operational events. These are meaningful and mutually beneficial exchanges. They include, among other interactions:

- Joint Staff Talks co-chaired by my counterpart on the Russian General Staff and me,
- Orientation for Russian military cadets at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point,
- Planning for a joint exercise to respond to a hijacked aircraft in national and international airspace,

- A visit of the faculty of the Russian Combined Arms Academy to the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center at Ft. Leavenworth, and
- A naval war game conducted by the Kuznetsov Naval Academy and the U.S. Naval War College.

In addition, the U.S. European Command and the Russian Ministry of Defense are postured to create an even more ambitious Work Plan for the coming year. Again, I want to reemphasize the utility of strong and consistent military-to-military relations, especially during crises. We nearly always regret severing such a relationship, as we did with Pakistan in the 1980s.

One important caveat I'd like to make in this context: our improved military relations with Russia need not come at the expense of our already positive and cooperative military relations with other important partners in the region. We do not believe it beneficial to engage in zero-sum gamesmanship in Eurasia and hope to convey that sentiment to our Russian colleagues through cooperative progress in areas of common strategic interest. We intend to continue our work with all parties to cultivate stability and enhanced transparency throughout the region.

For example, in the Black Sea region, U.S. naval activity is principally designed to achieve specific U.S. maritime engagement objectives with our partner countries in the region. Current engagement is actually at or below the level conducted prior to the August 2008 conflict in Georgia and is consistent with normal operations tempo. The only unforeseen increase in U.S. military activity in the region had to do with our humanitarian ship visits to Georgia immediately following the August conflict. Recent exercises in the region (e.g., COOPERATIVE LONGBOW and COOPERATIVE LANCER in Georgia) proceeded as planned. Where exercises have been cancelled or do not occur (e.g., SEABREEZE in Ukraine or IMMEDIATE RESPONSE in Poland), much of the time it is due to a general unavailability of forces from operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, or because of unmet administrative or legislative preconditions, as is the case in Ukraine. Russia also engages in military exercises in the region (e.g., KAVKAZ 09) to ensure adequate training, readiness and interoperability of its forces with other militaries in the region. We do not view such activities in a threatening light, nor should the Russians be sensitized to similar activities on the part of the U.S. and NATO forces in the region.

The U.S. and Russia share areas of both common interest and concern. I believe that the documents we signed in Moscow are a reflection of areas

in which we share common interest. Furthermore, militaries of the size and capabilities possessed by our two nations should remain engaged in constructive communications and dialogue not only to foster understanding and avoid unforeseen consequences, but to promote positive cooperation and enhance regional and global peace and stability. Perhaps by finding areas of cooperation we can alleviate or at least mitigate our areas of difference. Only through constant and routine interaction will positive change be cultivated.

Afghanistan

Today, the tension between alignment and divergence within our relationship with Russia is best represented by the situation in Afghanistan. Clearly, the U.S. and Russia share a common goal of building a secure and stable Central Asia, where neither terrorism nor narcotics spill over borders and threaten our citizens. However, Russia maintains a high sensitivity to long-term U.S. and NATO military presence in the region and seeks greater influence in achieving our collective end state. An excellent example of this is our basing agreement with Kyrgyzstan on the use of Manas Air Base. We have had a difficult journey over the past 6 months resolving this issue; however, I believe that the Russians now understand that the U.S. does not have long-term basing ambitions in Central Asia, which has assuaged Russian sensitivities with respect to our transitory presence in the region. We have consistently conveyed that our airbase at Manas is a transit center to support operations in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, as represented by the Joint Statement on Afghanistan and the Transit Agreement signed during the Moscow Summit, our nations have chosen to reject the false choice between cooperation on security and ceding a nation or region to the other's sphere of influence. Instead, we are choosing to work more constructively, with the intent that better cooperation creates trust, restores confidence, and provides a positive example for relations between Russia and NATO. Although the Transit Agreement is young and has yet to be utilized, the NATO-Russia non-lethal transit arrangement has already diversified and enhanced our logistical support to U.S. forces in Afghanistan, which has facilitated the movement of more than 1500 rail cars of vital supplies. Creating redundant logistical routes is an insurance policy on our strategic framework for success there.

START Follow-on Agreement

I'd like to add a couple of points on the subject of the START Follow-on Agreement. One of the Administration's main goals in our efforts to reengage the Russians is to negotiate a Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty Follow-on Agreement (SFO). Despite the looming expiration of the existing START Treaty and the importance of these negotiations to U.S.-Russian relations, the military recognizes the criticality of getting the details right as we look at new strategic arms limits to replace the START limits. The United States has made a commitment to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy and to strengthen global non-proliferation regimes. As we head in that direction, the Department of Defense has undertaken the congressionally mandated Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). The NPR is establishing the appropriate roles and necessary force structure for our nuclear forces and is a driver of our positions in the START Follow-on negotiations process–in no way are we reverse engineering our position.

As already mentioned, the Joint Understanding signed by Presidents Obama and Medvedev at the Moscow Summit established a framework for the remainder of the negotiations, and provided bounds to strategic offensive arms of 500 to 1100 strategic delivery vehicles and 1500 to 1675 for their associated warheads. While the final limits are still subject to negotiation, the reductions in the number of operationally deployed nuclear warheads are achievable, and are absolutely consistent with the latest NPR analysis. Reductions in the number of nuclear delivery systems are also achievable, though the U.S. and Russia are farther apart on this subject. To achieve lower numbers for the U.S. requires that some systems that are no longer part of the U.S. nuclear forces–but which are accountable under the current START Treaty–be excluded from the new treaty. For example, under START, 50 Peacekeeper missile silos and 50 Minuteman III silos that are currently empty and no longer usable (or intended for use) still count. Under current START attribution and counting rules, these unusable silos alone account for 550 nuclear warheads. They should not be accountable under a follow-on treaty.

Some of the other details captured by the Joint Understanding include:

- The definitions, data exchanges, notifications, eliminations, inspections and verification procedures, as well as confidence building and transparency measures, as adapted, simplified, and made less costly, as appropriate, will compare to the START Treaty.

- Inclusion of a provision on the interrelationship of strategic offensive and strategic defensive arms.
- A Treaty duration of ten years, unless it is superseded before that time by a subsequent treaty on the reduction of strategic offensive arms.
- The negotiators are to finish their work on the treaty soon so that the Presidents may sign and submit it for ratification in their respective countries.

The Joint Staff is deeply involved in the development of the negotiating positions and to ensure all Combatant Commander and Service equities are addressed. We recognize the stakes involved and the importance of achieving a successful START Follow-on negotiation to U.S. Russian relations as well as its importance in sending a message to the global community to demonstrate our leadership in non-proliferation efforts.

U.S.-Russia Joint Data Exchange Center

Finally, I'd also like to briefly mention the Joint Data Exchange Center (JDEC) that Presidents Obama and Medvedev discussed at the Moscow Summit. The Presidents reaffirmed the importance of the JDEC that was originally agreed to by both nations in 2000. The JDEC will be the first permanent joint operation in the strategic arena involving U.S. and Russian military personnel. These officers will work side by side to exchange ballistic missile launch information and reduce the risk of a false attack warning. The center is an important step forward in establishing transparency and confidence building measures between our two nations. A U.S. delegation has already met with their Russian counterparts and work will continue towards implementing the JDEC Memorandum of Agreement in the near term.

Summary

In conclusion, we have taken initial steps to get our military-to-military relationship with Russia back on a constructive footing and are moving toward the resolution of strategic disagreements that have long plagued the bilateral relationship. I'm confident that if we can retain the positive working environment that our Presidents established during the Moscow Summit, we will not only see continued success in our bilateral

military engagement with Russia, but we will create an excellent opportunity for addressing significant strategic issues in a coordinated and cooperative manner.

Testimony of Philip H. Gordon
Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs
House Armed Services Committee
July 30, 2009

"The U.S. Security Relationship with Russia and its Impact on Transatlantic Security"

Chairman Skelton, Congressman McKeon, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about the Administration's achievements in Moscow as a result of the summit meeting of President Obama and President Medvedev July 6-8.

In their Joint Statement in London on April 1, President Obama and President Medvedev committed to "resetting" U.S.-Russia relations and laid out an ambitious, substantive work plan for moving forward in a number of areas where the United States and Russia share national interests: from reducing our nuclear arsenals, preventing further proliferation of nuclear weapons, and countering the threat of nuclear terrorism to overcoming the effects of the global economic crisis and developing clean energy technologies. Recognizing that a fresh start to U.S.-Russia relations needs to be more than just warm words, the two presidents committed to deliver results.

After three months of close collaboration, the United States and Russia have worked hard to do exactly that. The achievements of the Moscow Summit will help put an end to a period of dangerous drift in U.S. - Russia relations by increasing our cooperation on a range of issues that are fundamental to the security and the prosperity of both countries. This significant progress in our relations with Russia, moreover, did not in any way come at the expense of our principles or partnerships with friends and allies. There are still many areas where the United States and Russia disagree and will continue to disagree. Nevertheless, we demonstrated in real terms our shared desire to build a relationship based on respect and mutual cooperation. Through the newly created Bilateral Presidential Commission, we will seek to broaden these areas of cooperation in a way that is mutually beneficial and improves security and stability around the world.

Today, I will highlight some of the examples of what was achieved in Moscow and outline our policy objectives as we go forward.

DELIVERING ON A FRESH START

First and foremost, the United States and Russia took important steps to increase nuclear security and prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, beginning with the reduction of our own nuclear arsenals. President Obama and President Medvedev signed a Joint Understanding to guide the work of negotiators on a follow-on agreement to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), which will reduce our nuclear warheads and delivery systems by at least one third of our current treaty limitations. This is a level of reduction that will be lower than in any other previous strategic arms control agreement. Negotiators have already met once since the summit and will continue to meet as required until an agreement is reached. This new agreement will be yet another step in support of the goals outlined by President Obama during his speech in Prague and will help demonstrate Russian and American leadership in strengthening the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

In their Joint Statement on nuclear security cooperation, the two presidents further committed to work together and with other nations to secure nuclear materials worldwide. Following on his announcement in Prague to convene a global nuclear security summit next year, the President suggested to President Medvedev that Russia host a subsequent summit to continue progress on this critical issue. The presidents also agreed to strengthen U.S.-Russia cooperation to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to stop acts of nuclear terrorism as well as affirmed a common vision to see the growth of clean, safe, secure, and affordable nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Both presidents noted current negative proliferation trends and agreed on the need to hold other nations accountable to prevent the emergence of a nuclear arms race in some of the most volatile places in the world. In his remarks, President Obama praised Russia's recent support for UN Security Council Resolution 1874 on North Korea and welcomed Russia's agreement to participate in a joint threat assessment of the ballistic missile challenges of the 21st century, including those posed by Iran and North Korea. Also important, the presidents agreed to intensify dialogue on establishing the Joint Data Exchange Center as a basis for multilateral missile launch notification regime. President Obama and his Russian counterparts spoke at length on Iran, agreeing to continue to work together to address threats emanating from this region. President Obama noted the opportunity for intensified cooperation, emphasizing the importance of Russia's role in pressing Iran to comply with its non-proliferation obligations.

Second, we made concrete commitments to deepen security cooperation, including by working together to defeat violent extremists and to counter transnational threats, including those of piracy and narcotics trafficking. Particularly significant was a transit agreement through which the United States will be able to transport its military personnel and equipment across Russia in support of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force as well as our Coalition Forces in Afghanistan, a mission that has clear security benefits for Russia and the United States. This agreement will further diversify our crucial supply routes, resulting in a potential savings of up to $133 million in fuel, maintenance, and other transportation costs. In addition, the United States and Russia affirmed their commitment to increase assistance provided to the Government of Afghanistan in developing the capabilities of the Afghan National Army and police, and in training counternarcotics personnel. Both the agreement and the Joint Statement were Russian initiatives and represent a substantial contribution by Russia to our international effort.

The United States and Russia also agreed to resume practical cooperation between our militaries. On the margins of the Summit, Admiral Mullen and the Russian Chief of Defense signed a strategic framework for military-to-military engagement, thereby raising our military cooperation to a new level and striving to deepen mutual understanding between our respective armed forces. Within this framework, U.S. and Russian military forces agreed to conduct nearly 20 exchanges and operational events before the end of 2009. This will facilitate improved cooperation and interoperability between our armed forces, so that we can better address transnational threats such as terrorism, narcotics trafficking, and piracy on the high seas.

Finally, the United States and Russia took steps to build cooperation in areas affecting the well-being and prosperity of our people. For example, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Russian Ministry of Health and Social Development signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Public Health and Medical Science. The Memorandum establishes a framework for deeper cooperation between these government institutions to fight infectious diseases and chronic and non-communicable diseases, to promote healthy lifestyles and to protect the health of mothers and young children. We also agreed to restore the work of the Joint Commission on Prisoners of War and Missing in Action, which will allow our researchers to resume the vital work of obtaining information on our missing servicemen and women.

While our achievements in Moscow were substantive, we recognize that the ultimate test will be whether or not we can continue to build on this progress in meaningful, tangible ways. Acknowledging the need for a more structured foundation for advancing our cooperation, the two Presidents thus agreed to create a Bilateral Presidential Commission, which they will chair and Secretary of State Clinton and Foreign Minister Lavrov will coordinate. The Commission will include working groups on nuclear energy and nuclear security; arms control and international security; foreign policy and fighting terrorism; drug trafficking; business development and economic relations; energy and the environment: agriculture; and civil society, among other areas. The work of the Commission will be geared towards producing results, not just dialogue. Its working group structure is intended to be both inclusive of the many agencies within our governments and dynamic, adapting to our many shared interests and changing priorities.

These successes build on existing U.S. assistance programs that foster U.S.-Russian cooperation on key global issues such as counter-proliferation, health threats and counter-terrorism, and are a demonstration of the value of continuing assistance to Russia in areas where it supports U.S. interests.

STANDING FIRM ON OUR PRINCIPLES

Despite all of these positive developments, we have no illusions that our reset of relations will be easy or that we will not continue to have differences with Russia. Nonetheless, we are confident that the United States and Russia can still work together where our interests coincide while at the same time seeking to narrow our differences in an open and mutually respectful way.

As we advance our relations with Russia, we will not abandon our principles or ignore concerns about democracy and human rights. In numerous venues during his Moscow trip, including in his comments to the Russian press and during meetings with government officials and opposition leaders, President Obama made a point of raising human rights concerns and urging support for the development of civil society. In his remarks at the New Economic School, the President affirmed America's conviction that it is democratic governments that best protect the rights of their peoples. He stressed that it is our commitment to democratic principles and human rights which allows us to correct our own imperfections, and to grow stronger over time. The President also spoke of how the freedoms of speech and assembly allow citizens to protest for full and equal rights and how rule of law can work to shut down corruption and end abuses of power. He also advocated on

behalf of independent media, which is imperative not only in fighting corruption and making government more accountable but also in making government more effective. The United States supports these universal rights and freedoms at home, in Russia, and around the globe. In support of these principles and in recognition that progress requires a sustained commitment to supporting democratic actors, this year the U.S. Government is providing over $29 million in assistance to advance democracy and human rights in Russia, most of which is targeted to strengthen civil society, independent media and the rule of law.

The importance of addressing human rights concerns was made more real when just over a week after the President's return from Moscow, human rights activist Natalya Estemirova was kidnapped and later found dead. The State Department and White House have spoken out against this heinous crime and we are vigorously supporting President Medvedev's calls for an appropriate application of justice in this case. This tragedy reminds us of the pressing nature of the concerns facing civil society in Russia, and underscores our resolve to make progress in our bilateral discussions with Russia on civil society cooperation.

During his visit to Moscow, the President also made clear that the "reset" in our bilateral relationship will not come at the expense of our friends and allies. Rather, we believe our efforts to improve relations with Russia can only benefit these countries as we seek to defuse zero sum thinking about our relations with Russia's neighbors. The United States does not recognize a Russian sphere of influence and will continue to support the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence of Russia's neighbors, including their sovereign right to make their own choices about their defense and alliance relationships. This message was reiterated strongly during the Vice President's visit to Ukraine and Georgia last week.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Moscow Summit succeeded in generating a fresh start in our relations with Russia. We need to take advantage of this positive momentum as we launch the new Bilateral Presidential Commission and follow up on the goals set by our presidents, in particular with regard to reaching agreement on a treaty to replace START, which expires in December 2009. Assistant Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller and her counterpart have not wasted any time, having met last week to discuss further the parameters of the new treaty and to plan a robust schedule of future discussions as we seek to conclude the treaty by December. Following up on other summit deliverables, we will work to implement cooperation on non-proliferation, missile defense, and security and stability in Afghanistan. We will

also continue to coordinate closely with Russia on such issues as counterterrorism, counternarcotics, Iran, and North Korea, and on bringing peace to the Middle East.

We are confident that improved U.S.-Russia relations will increase trust and cooperation and enhance European security as well. The United States remains committed to working with Russia to improve existing structures and mechanisms for joint cooperation concerning European security and exploring ways to increase their effectiveness, including through improved implementation. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe will serve as an important forum for such a discussion, as the sole multilateral organization in Europe that brings us all together on equal terms. The Administration welcomes the resumption of the NATO-Russia Council as a forum for all-weather political dialogue and as an important venue for achieving practical results in areas of mutual interest, such as Afghanistan and counterterrorism. In addressing the impasse created by Russia's suspension of its implementation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, we will continue to work with Russia, along with our allies and partners, to seek a solution that is acceptable to all CFE states.

The United States and Russia also have much work to do to realize the "reset" in our economic relations. Recognizing that our economic fortunes are intertwined, the Administration will seek to deepen our economic ties with Russia, opening up opportunities for new investments and trade between our two countries, which will create new jobs, promote innovation, and contribute to our shared prosperity. Two-way trade between the United States and Russia, while growing, totaled only $36.1 billion last year. This figure is relatively low when compared to our other trade relationships. We believe we can do better. Across the Administration we are working on a number of fronts with Russia to expand and deepen our bilateral trade and investment. The new Bilateral Presidential Commission will supplement those efforts, through working groups on Business Development and Economic Relations, Agriculture, Energy and Environment, and Science and Technology, to explore these new opportunities and expand our cooperation across a wide range of economic sectors.

While looking to create opportunities, the Commission's working groups will also focus on removing obstacles to improving our trade and economic relations. As the President pointed out in Moscow, transparency, accountability, and rule of law are vital to the health of any economy, and we support the initiatives of the Russian president to strengthen Russia's legal system and fight corruption. The United States and Russia need to work together to limit bureaucracy and refrain from

imposing protectionist measures which stand in the way of our shared prosperity and economic recovery.

The Administration has been working with Russia to address some current measures that raise concerns. Since last year, Russia's Agriculture Ministry has attempted to control imports of meat and poultry products from the United States through the imposition of food safety measures that are not in accordance with international standards or based on science. Furthermore, Russian veterinarians continue to restrict the number of American plants processing poultry, pork and beef that can ship to Russia by refusing to recognize U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) inspection of those plants as agreed in a bilateral agreement. Working with our colleagues in USDA and USTR, we have made some important progress in restoring that trade; since the Summit, Russia has lifted restrictions on imports of U.S. meat and poultry, stemming from an unfounded fear of H1N1 contamination, from several states. These restrictions threatened U.S. exports, which earned over $1.3 billion last year. The Administration will continue to work with Russia's Veterinary Service to eliminate H1N1-related bans on our meat trade from the last remaining state, Florida. We will also continue to press Russia's veterinarians to recognize USDA's authority to inspect poultry, pork, or beef plants and approve them to export product to Russia. In addition, we will continue to urge Russia to issue a Government Decree establishing a process by which it would move to developing food safety standards based on international standards. All of these steps will increase the predictability and stability of our bilateral meat and poultry trade.

On non-agriculture trade issues, the Administration is working to ensure full implementation of the United States-Russia Bilateral IPR Agreement to strengthen Russia's IPR regime and enforcement against extensive counterfeiting and piracy, including Internet piracy. We are also seeking implementation of the United States-Russia Bilateral Agreement on Products with Encryption Technology to liberalize the importation of mass-market information technology products.

A major opportunity for expanding U.S.-Russian economic ties continues to be lost with Russia's absence from the 153-member World Trade Organization (WTO). The United States supports Russia's accession to the WTO and integration into the global rules-based trading system. While the United States wants to see Russia join the WTO, the pace at which Russia makes progress towards this goal continues to depend on Russia. In London this past April, Presidents Obama and Medvedev agreed to take steps to finalize as soon as possible Russia's individual accession into the WTO. Subsequent Ministerial-level contacts confirmed this.

The June 9 announcement that Russia would suspend its individual WTO application and seek to join the WTO as part of a customs union with Belarus and Kazakhstan came as a surprise to us and many other WTO Members. As USTR Kirk has told his Russian counterparts, the WTO rules do not provide for the accession of a customs union, and following this path will only further delay Russia's accession. We stand ready to work hard with Russia and the other 152 Members of the WTO to complete its accession to the WTO as an individual country member.

Lastly, Americans and Russians have a common interest in the development of the rule of law, the strengthening of democracy, and the protection of human rights. As President Obama stated, we not only need a "reset" in relations between the American and Russian governments, but also a reset in relations between our societies and he called for "more dialogue, more listening, more cooperation in confronting common challenges." The Bilateral Presidential Commission's working groups on Civil Society and Educational and Cultural Exchanges will work to promote ties between our societies and make civil society promotion an integral part of our bilateral relationship. Beyond the working groups, we will continue to make a point of maintaining an open dialogue through a variety of channels, official and non-official, with Russian leaders, civil society representatives, members of the media, and human rights activists.

Conclusion

At the Moscow Summit, the United States and Russia took significant steps forward in translating the "reset" in relations into concrete achievements to benefit both our nations as well as our global partners. Without abandoning our principles or our friends or ignoring our concerns about democracy or human rights, we demonstrated that the United States and Russia can work effectively together on a broad range of issues where our interests coincide, from security issues and economic issues to energy, the environment, and health. Recognizing that more unites us than divides us, President Obama and President Medvedev expressed confidence that the United States and Russia can continue to act to benefit the people of both countries, while seeking to narrow our differences in an open and mutually respectful way. Russia and the United States will continue to work very hard together to find practical solutions to some of the most pressing global challenges.

Mr. Chairman, Congressman McKeon, members of the Committee, I am grateful for the opportunity to speak before you today, and I welcome the opportunity to respond to your questions.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

JULY 30, 2009

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. SHUSTER

Mr. SHUSTER. Speaking at the Ukraine House exposition center on July 22, 2009, VP Biden countered Russian claims made following their War with Georgia by stating, "We recognize no sphere of influence, or no ability of any other nation to veto the choices an independent nation makes as to with whom and under what conditions they will associate." Does this statement apply to all Former Soviet States and Russia's neighbors and what actions is the Obama Administration willing to take to uphold this position?

Secretary GORDON. Both the President and Vice-President have made clear that the United States rejects any notion of a country having a "sphere of influence" or declaring they have "privileged relations" with other nations. We continue to support the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Russia's neighbors, as well as their sovereign right to make their own choices about their defense and alliance relationships. The President has addressed this issue very directly and clearly in his discussion with his Russian counterpart, and noted that we will not paper over our differences on these issues even as we seek to cooperate in areas where it is in both countries' interests. The United States continues to support NATO enlargement and the aspirant countries working to meet NATO's performance-based standards for membership. We reject zero-sum thinking regarding Russia and its neighbors, and believe that our good relations with Russia and with its neighboring countries are not mutually exclusive.

Mr. SHUSTER. How does the Obama Administration plan to encourage Russia to comply with its obligations under the Six Point Peace Plan with Georgia and prevent loose interpretations of the agreement that violate the intent of the agreement?

Secretary GORDON. The United States calls on all states to uphold their commitments under numerous UN Security Council resolutions to support Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty. We continue to press the Russian Government to fulfill its August 12 Ceasefire Commitments to allow humanitarian access to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, to pull back their troops to positions held prior to the outbreak of hostilities, and to continue its engagement in the ongoing Geneva talks. The United States is actively working with the UN, OSCE and EU to restore an adequate monitoring presence in the conflict zones and maximize the participation of the international community in promoting human rights and the unhindered provision of humanitarian aid in all of Georgia. We are also working to convince the Russians to revisit their decision to block the UN Observer Mission in Georgia and the OSCE Conflict Prevention Center. We support the efforts of the EU Monitoring Mission, welcome the Incident Response Prevention Mechanism talks which have aided in lowering tensions in the region, and encourage Russia to weigh on South Ossetian and Abkhaz authorities to cooperate fully in those talks.

Mr. SHUSTER. Since Russian military doctrine identifies NATO's eastward enlargement as a threat to its National Security because Former Soviet States have joined or are seeking NATO membership, how will this affect Russian/NATO relations?

Secretary GORDON. The United States and our NATO Allies are committed to upholding Article 10 of the Washington Treaty, which states that "The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty." As the President has made clear, we also stand by the principle that all states have a right to choose their own Alliances, and no country should have a "sphere of privileged interests." At the same time, we seek areas for practical cooperation with Russia in the NATO–Russia Council on such issues as counter-narcotics, counterterrorism, and Afghanistan, to name only a few. It also means engaging with Russia in a broader security dialogue in which we seek to reject zero-sum thinking about security in Europe and Eurasia. We believe NATO Allies and Russia both have an interest in cooperation, and we will continue to pursue practical cooperation and engage with Russia in a broader dialogue about European security while maintaining NATO's principle of an open door.

Mr. SHUSTER. The transit agreement made with Russia on July 6th allows the U.S. to move troops and critical equipment to resupply international forces in Af-

ghanistan and to bring needed supplies to the government and people of Afghanistan, potentially saving $133 million annually, but at what cost is this agreement made to the strategic flexibility of United States response to any Russian actions or aggression during a crisis without having "troops or critical equipment or supplies" delayed, halted, or detained in transit to Afghanistan?

Secretary GORDON. The transit agreement provides the United States with an additional avenue in the Northern Distribution Network for the supply of the international mission in Afghanistan. If we were to lose access to this avenue, we would continue to utilize the non-Russian routes we have heretofore been using to move supplies to Afghanistan. Beyond the material benefit to our resupply efforts, this agreement also serves as an example of the potential for cooperation with Russia and underscores the strategic importance of success in Afghanistan to both our countries. We look forward to working with Russia bilaterally and in multilateral fora towards a stable, prosperous Afghanistan.

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