



Congressional Testimony

U.S.–RUSSIA RELATIONS IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE GEORGIA CRISIS

Testimony by Michael McFaul
Senior Associate
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

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REP. BERMAN: I apologize for the late time that you've been asked to come up here, but I know that won't affect the quality of your testimony. It just may affect the tenacity of the questioners.

You've both been introduced. Dr. McFaul, why don't you start?

MR. MCFAUL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen and everybody who's still here, and a few in the audience as well; that's a good sign.

Let me just say one thing at the outset. I work for Senator Obama. I advise him as an unpaid adviser on the issues we're discussing today. But I want to reinforce the fact that I'm here speaking on my own accord as a Stanford professor.

I just happened to bring some statements. If anybody wants to know what the senator said, I have them right here. And I'll let them speak for themselves and let me speak for myself today.

I'll tell you, I'm not thrilled to be here, just like the last time you asked me to fly across the country to talk to you. This is not the kind of Russia that I had hoped for 20 years ago when I was involved in trying to work inside Russia. It's most certainly not the kind of U.S.-Russian relationship I had envisioned 20 years ago when I got involved in these issues.

I do think we have to have a bigger picture, however, involved. We've been focused in the weeds, rightly, about what happened in Tskhimvali and what the Russian response was. And I really do think it's important to get those facts straight. I happen to think it was a really ill-considered mistake that President Saakashvili decided to do what he did in Tskhimvali. And in my written remarks -- I have them all there, and without objection, I'd like to have those in the record.

REP. BERMAN: The entire testimony will be in the record.

MR. MCFAUL: Thank you. All that's very important. But we should not get, in some way, distracted from the fact that Russia has a grand strategy that it has been pursuing, not just in August but for several years, in the region. And most certainly I think Mr. Saakashvili made mistakes, but let's also not make the mistake of getting in a tit-for-tat of who fired when first, because it's a bigger enterprise and a bigger strategy.

And in my opinion, if we're going to face it properly, we also have to have a bigger strategy. I'm dismayed, I have to tell you honestly, by the way we've been debating this issue so far. And if I could oversimplify what I read in The New York Times today and the press, it's either -- there's only two responses that the United States can have.

One is business as usual. We need Russia, for instance, for a U.N. Security Council resolution on Iran, and therefore we have to soft-pedal what we say about Georgia. I think that is very short-sighted and not strategic and really fundamentally misunderstands how Russia defines its own interests. You're not going to get a U.N. Security Council resolution on Iran because of soft-pedaling what you say about Georgia.

That's not the way the Russian leadership thinks. And we, I think, are doing ourselves a disfavor to think business as usual will yield a different result in terms of Russia's grand strategy and Russia's definition of its own national interest.

At the same time, the converse, the other extreme of isolation, kicking them out of this club and the other club, that also, I think, is an oversimplified way to think about our grand strategy. And so what I tried to do in my remarks was to lay out a truly big, comprehensive strategy that I will not try to rehearse in detail for you right now. But it consists of 12 steps -- not one, not two, not a sound bite, but of 12 steps that we should do if we want to play on an equal playing field with the Russians in thinking about our own national interests.

Let me just go through, and I want to highlight two at the end in particular. First, we need to reunify our alliance. The fact that we are not unified on this issue is hurting us. There's no doubt about that in my mind.

Second, we need to affirm our Article V commitment to our NATO alliance partners. There are doubts among them. We need to affirm them.

Third, we need to affirm our recognition of Georgian territorial integrity and make clear under no circumstances will we ever recognize the territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent countries. I disagree radically with the notion that Abkhazia and Kosovo are the same, and maybe we can get into the questions. I would just -- in that during the question period.

I would just note that at the time of Georgian independence, only 18 percent of the population of Abkhazia were ethnic Abkhaz, and it was ethnic cleansing sponsored by the Russians that had created the situation here. That is the exact opposite of what NATO was doing in Kosovo.

Fourth, we have to rebuild Russia. You've spent a lot of time on that. But Mr. Chairman, I really support and strongly endorse your idea that a big chunk of that needs to be democracy assistance. Georgian democracy, and especially independent media, needs our support, especially right now.

Fifth, we have to preemptively reduce the potential for Russian mischief against Ukraine. I outlined the remarks. I'll just skip that for now.

Sixth, I think we have to have a U.N. Security Council vote, even if Russia vetoes it, and continue to demonstrate how isolated Russia is on this issue. Again, it's not like Kosovo. There's one other country in the world that has recognized these two territories. That's Nicaragua. And the more we do that, including with China, including with other countries that generally support Russia, the better we are.

Seventh, we need to reduce dependency of Russian energy exports in Europe and Eurasia. My testimony outlines three very constructive ways to do that.

Eighth, together with our allies -- and I want to stress, it has to be with our allies or it doesn't matter at all -- I think we have to consider future punitive measures against Russia if they do not adhere to the cease-fire, if they do not adhere to the terms and pull back to August 7th levels.

I outlined some ideas that I have in my written testimony.

I think companies that begin to work inside these two territories should be sanctioned, and countries that recognize them should also be sanctioned. Maybe we can talk about that more in detail in the questions.

Ninth, we have to increase the independent flow of information into this region. Your budgets that you have been approving for Voice of America and Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, in my opinion, simply do not reflect American strategic interests; by my estimation, about \$800 million all total, and only \$9 million of that goes to Russia.

If you've watched the Russian news, as I have, it is gross and appalling, Soviet-style propaganda. And I know; I lived in the Soviet Union. I know what it looks like. This is what it is. We have to be engaged in helping to let Russians have independent sources of news.

Tenth, we cannot give up on Russian democracy or democracy in any of these regions. When I look at your budgets for the Freedom Support Act and I see they have been halved in the last eight years -- and I want to emphasize this -- halved -- there's only two explanations.

One is that there's just a gross misunderstanding by the Bush administration and the U.S. Congress about the status of democracy in Russia and Georgia and Ukraine and the region, or this is a statement of defeatism. That means you've given up on democracy. And I strongly urge you to really reconsider those numbers moving forward. And that's something the Congress can do, irrespective of who's in the White House.

You have to have a real review of what we've gotten. And I think to spend more money without a real evaluation of what we've gotten for that money in the last eight years would be irresponsible as a U.S. Congress. And I outline what should happen. But to give up now, I think, is really short-sighted.

Eleventh -- and I'll end on this -- doing all these things does not mean that we don't talk directly to the Russians about our interests and things that we care about. That means talking to them about reducing nuclear arsenals, nonproliferation, dealing with Iran. But we do it not as a favor to them. We do it not asking them to do us a favor, because they don't think that way. So if we impose that way of thinking, I think we're really naïve.

But we can talk to them, as we did during the Cold War, by the way, at the height of some of the most tense times, and at the same time do these other measures.

And then finally, as I end my written remarks, we have to keep the door open for a different Russian response. We have a national security interest in Russia being in all the western

institutions. And I would say, and I've said many times before, a democratic Russia should be allowed to apply for membership in NATO as well. I want to emphasize the adjective -- democratic Russia, not the current Russia. And we want to keep that door open that should Russia and Russians -- because they don't all think alike -- reverse their course and want to reintegrate, we have to keep that door open.

Thank you.

REP. BERMAN: Very good.

Dr. Kagan.

MR. KAGAN: Chairman Berman --

REP. BERMAN: Beyond-my-wildest-dreams Kagan.

MR. KAGAN: (Laughs.) Yes, sir, Congressman Ros-Lehtinen, thank you for having me here. As my good friend, Mike McFaul, said, this is not a happy occasion. In other circumstances, I would be glad to be in front of this committee not talking about Iraq, but this is, in fact, a very grave moment in international history. And I fear that we are more likely to underreact to this than to overreact to it.

And so, in keeping with what my focus on this particular crisis has been, which has been primarily understanding, reporting, analyzing rather than going through laundry lists of recommendations -- and I endorse most of the things that my colleague recommends, naturally, and will add a few more -- but I think that it's worth laying out a basis of fact just so that we can understand the actual gravity of this situation, because I fear that some of this is being lost.

We must start by dispensing with the notion that there is any sort of legal or moral equivalency between what the government of Georgia did and what the Russians did. And I'm distressed at how often people talk about Georgia invading South Ossetia. South Ossetia was and is, according to international law, a legal part of the Republic of Georgia. And the Russians themselves, while operations were going on, including the foreign minister, publicly recognized that South Ossetia was legally part of the Republic of Georgia.

Now, the Georgian activities and presence in South Ossetia were governed by a number of international agreements that were mostly bilateral or quadrilateral agreements with Russia, but those did not, and exclusively did not, eliminate Georgian control over that republic. And therefore, to speak about a Georgian invasion of South Ossetia is fundamentally to accept the Russian propaganda line. And I think that we must avoid doing that.

Furthermore, whatever term you want to use for what the Georgians did, it was not an invasion of Russian territory. It did not pose the slightest threat to Russian territory. It was not in any way an attack on Russia.

The provisions under which the Russian so-called peacekeepers are in South Ossetia -- and I have read them; they're not that easy to find, but I tracked them down -- do not appear to me to give the Russians legal basis for the response that they then launched in South Ossetia. Certainly they had no such basis for the reinforcement with 6,000 troops into Abkhazia, where nothing had happened.

And so it actually is -- whereas the Georgian action may be open to question, the legality of the Russian action, I think, is actually not open to question.

Now, I think that it's important to note what happened immediately after the Georgians went back into South Ossetia with forces. Within hours, possibly within minutes, a motorized rifle regiment was on the way from the Russian base of Vladikavkaz through the Roki tunnel, which had previously been secured by forces of either the FSB, which is the KGB successor, or the Spetsnaz.

In addition, the Russians immediately scrambled elements of two airborne divisions, one from the vicinity of Skoff (sp) and the other one from the vicinity of Moscow, and they were on their way following a path that they had rehearsed not three weeks before in a military exercise called Abkhaz 2008 in which exactly one of those airborne regiments had, in fact, done exactly what it did again.

And additional reinforcements, including illegal combatants, Cossack volunteers, and subsequently the same Spetsnaz forces that committed atrocities in Chechnya were also directed into South Ossetia.

But even more than that, the Russians immediately began to attack targets throughout Georgia. And if you'll forgive me, because the Russians had the stated intention of weakening the Georgian military overall, and they publicly declare that that was their aim, because they were identifying Georgia as an aggressor state that posed a threat to them, I'd like just to run quickly through what they actually did.

Russian mechanized units drove from Tskhimvali to the key city of Gori, which, as we all know, sits astride the road and rail links from Tbilisi to the Black Sea and is Georgia's lifeline. Gori is also the location of Georgia's single separate tank battalion and single separate artillery battalion.

Russian troops appear to have occupied the cantonments of both of those units. They systematically destroyed the infrastructure at those bases. They seized a great deal of Georgian military equipment, which they subsequently claimed were trophies of war.

They also advanced from Abkhazia not only to Poti, as has been noticed, which was a civilian port with no military interest for the Russians, but into the Georgian cities of Zugdidi, which is on the Abkhaz border, and also Senaki.

Senaki, which is actually nowhere near the combat zone in either location, is the base of one of Georgia's most advanced brigades. And Russian sources report that as Russian troops sat in Senaki, airlifts continued of various different types of demolition specialists so that the

Russians could level the base, which was clearly their intention, and either destroy the equipment that was there or take it away with them.

The Russian troops also occupied the Inguri hydroelectric power station, which had been jointly controlled by Georgian and Abkhaz security officials and was jointly shared. That hydroelectric station provides almost all of the electricity to western Georgia, as well as to Abkhazia. It was never in any danger from Georgian troops. It is, in fact, I believe, on Georgian territory as opposed to Abkhaz territory. Be that as it may, there is absolutely no provision for the Russians to have taken it.

And finally, it's very important to recognize that, according to Human Rights Watch, whereas there is no evidence whatever of a Georgian genocide, which the Russians have accused, nor is there any concrete evidence that I have seen of Georgian war crimes, there is very well-documented evidence of a deliberate campaign of ethnic cleansing that was conducted by Ossetians against Georgians within South Ossetia under the control of Russian supposed peacekeepers.

At a minimum, the Russians were gravely derelict in their international responsibilities in allowing such a campaign to go on. In reality, it's virtually certain that the Russians were complicit in that campaign of ethnic cleansing, which, again, I refer you to Human Rights Watch for satellite imagery and a variety of other detailed interviews that demonstrate what was going on.

It's also important to understand that the Russians have made a number of declaratory statements about their justifications for this that should be incredibly troubling. And I would say that I'm even more troubled than Dr. Fried reported the administration to be about the import of some of these declarations.

The Russians have asserted their right to intervene in neighboring states on behalf of Russian citizens. Now, the exact language that President Medvedev has used does not imply -- in fact, explicitly states that this is not simply a matter of protecting the lives of Russian citizens in those areas, but the phrase that he always uses is that Russia has the right to intervene militarily in its neighbors to protect the lives and dignity of Russians in those areas.

And if you reflect on the fact that every single former Soviet republic has a significant Russian minority, that is a limitless declaration of de facto Russian suzerainty over the former Soviet republics, and it is clearly intentional.

If you then look at the phenomenally effective Russian information operation campaign, an element of that was to bring the Georgian government file for so-called genocide which didn't happen. And again, you'd have to look closely at what the Russians are saying. The Russian prosecutor general announced that Russian law specifically gives Russian courts the right to try the leaders of foreign sovereign states for actions committed against the interests of Russians in Russian court under Russian law.

Again, this is a de facto assertion of Russian suzerainty, if not sovereignty, over at least the territories of the former Soviet Union, and I think that it is incredibly distressing.

So you have, just to sum this up very quickly, Russia invaded the territory of a sovereign state that had not attacked it or threatened it in any way. Russia conducted a deliberate strategic bombing campaign against both civilian and military targets in that state with which Russia was not at war and was not engaging in any activity remotely commensurate with such a response. Russia seized -- actually, I think "stole" would be a more appropriate word -- Georgian civilian and military hardware from Georgia proper. Russia systematically demolished Georgian military infrastructure in Georgia proper.

Russia failed to perform its international legal responsibility at a minimum by allowing Ossetian separatists to undertake an ethnic cleansing campaign in areas it was occupying. And it has supported Abkhazian separatists militarily in a land grab, as they not only drove Georgian peacekeepers out of the Kodori gorge, but then advanced the border of Abkhazia all the way to the Inguri River with active Russian support.

These activities are flagrant violations of international law. They are flagrant violations of international norms. They're flagrant violations of multiple agreements that Russia had voluntarily entered into. And they are frankly on a par, from the standpoint of their legal impact, with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

Now, that is not to say that we should respond with a Desert Storm, or a Mountain Storm in this case, to relieve Georgia. And it is not to say that we should terminate relations with Russia, isolate Russia permanently, or any of that. But it is to say that we must recognize, in all of these discussions, that the actions we're describing strike at the very root and fabric of international law.

And if you ask the question, "What is America's interest here?" we can talk about the pipeline. We can talk about Georgia as an ally. And I think there's something rather despicable in the notion that, as Georgian troops fly back from Iraq, where they were fighting alongside our troops, as has been pointed out, attempting to contain Iran, among other things, that we should say, "Oh, well, the Georgians shouldn't have gone into their own territory; therefore, the heck with them." I find that rather a disturbing comment.

But the real interest at stake here is an interest that could not be more important to the United States of America. Does the United States of America support international law or does it not? If it does, then we have a responsibility to take action in response to this. And I would say to begin with, the objective of that action should be to deter and prevent further conflict. It is very distressing that the government of Ukraine has become involved in this conflict in a way that is very destabilizing in Kiev. It is even more distressing when Izvestia publishes a very long article explaining in detail not only what Russia's right is to reclaim the Crimea but exactly how it will go about doing that, and when the Russians then announce that they are increasing their security presence in Black Sea port facilities. I find that very distressing.

Now, the concrete steps -- I've gone through some recommendations in this testimony, which I would ask would be included.

REP. BERMAN: (Inaudible.)

MR. KAGAN: What I would highlight is that the Russian assertion and anyone's assertion that we do not have a right to provide our ally -- whether it is a NATO ally or not -- Georgia -- with the defensive capability to protect itself against attack with weapons that do not in any way threaten Russia, unless Russia plans to invade again, is absolutely unacceptable. We should send, in my view, the Georgians the military assistance they need right now to help deter further Russian aggression because my assessment of the situation -- and I'll be eager to hear what the Department of Defense assessment team comes back with -- is that Georgia at this moment is not in any way capable of defending itself against Russia. And that means that Georgia's continued existence depends upon Moscow's good will -- something that has been hitherto in very short supply.

I think we also need to relook at the question of our military assistance to the Baltic states, who are very short -- they have a virtually nonexistent air defense, and to Poland, which the Russians have threatened outrageously even though the anti-ballistic missile system there does not threaten them in any way. And I think that we need to consider what measures we can take to help make all of --

REP. BERMAN: Say that again -- the what doesn't threaten Russia?

MR. KAGAN: The ballistic missile defense system that we've installed in Poland, which does not threaten Russia in any way. And I'd be happy to go into that more in questions if you want.

We should be helping these states to become unattractive targets of further Russian aggression by providing them with defensive capabilities.

And I think -- and I will close on this -- it's important to recognize this is not the Red Army. It is not the Red Air Force.

We are not talking about multimillion-man armed forces with which the Russians can overwhelm everybody. This -- the Russian military threat is a threat that can be deterred. It can be deterred conventionally. And I think that it would be well in our interest -- very much in our interest to do that because if the objective is not to have conflict, making it so that the states that are most threatened by conflict can defend themselves adequately is one of the best ways to begin.

Thank you.

REP. BERMAN: Well, you both have given us a lot to think about. And unfortunately because of the circumstances of the 24 hours since I've been in this town, I didn't have a chance to read either of your testimonies before now, and I intend to do that. But I -- let me throw out a couple of things on my time now, and then we'll hear from others, and maybe I'll have a few more things after we go through one round.

But -- let's start with your last point. I don't know much about that business of conventional deterrents. It sounds quite improbable that there is any level of arms we could provide the Georgians or for that matter the Ukrainians that, if for no other reason constraining the

Russians, those arms would deter Russia from doing something they decided they wanted to do. Am I -- is that my ignorance or are you overestimating the ability to create that kind of deterrent?

MR. KAGAN: Mr. Chairman, I'm giving you a preview of a report that we'll be releasing today or subsequently where we've taken a hard look at what the military balance actually is. The Ukrainian military is actually in a pretty formidable force, and it's not something that I think the Russians could imagine attacking even as it is right now. The issue with the defense of Ukraine primarily comes in when the Russians have announced and are engaged in what looks like a very ambitious modernization --

REP. BERMAN: Push that a little bit. Take -- just forget all of Ukraine. Just talk about Crimea. Apparently Pravda told the world how they plan to do it.

MR. KAGAN: Yeah. The Russians probably could take Sevastopol, the port facility there. Now, you get down into very small scenarios. Yes, they probably could do that, although it would be frankly much harder for them than what they did in Georgia.

We have to understand that what they did in Georgia was about the easiest thing of any of these because it was right there on their border. They've the military base that's right there. They were able to control the pass through the mountain right away, and it's very important -- this is very important point: The Georgians had configured their military to assist us and NATO in peacekeeping missions, and they had not in any way configured their military -- and this was a lapse, I think, in our assistance program to them -- they had not in any way configured their military to resist Russian aggression. That is not the case with Ukraine, and it is definitely not the case with the Baltic States. And if you look at the limitations that the Russian military showed, even in this relatively easy undertaking, I do think that it's within the realm of the conceivable that we could make it rather unattractive. Can we stop them? No, of course not. If they want to take Estonia, we can't stop them without NATO intervention. Of course, Estonia is a NATO member. Ukraine certainly can defend itself, but I think we could make even the Balts -- even on their own very unappealing with not a lot of investment.

REP. BERMAN: But in any event, what I could draw from what you've said is not only should we provide military assistance but it should not be with the notion of replenishing that which they've lost but of seriously upgrading the quality of the equipment, the level of the training, the strategic advice on how to posture against a Russian threat and that sending them -- replenishing what they had before might be the closest thing to wasting money one could do.

MR. KAGAN: Well, it wouldn't necessarily be a waste of money. A lot of that equipment might be helpful. But we do -- I agree with the thrust of your point, which is that we need to fundamentally rethink the purpose of our engagement with Georgia. And frankly we need to fundamentally rethink the purpose of NATO. NATO has existed for the past two decades on the premise that there was no military threat from Russia. If that is in fact not true, and the Eastern European members of the alliance certainly feel that it is no longer true, then we

need a fundamental top-to-bottom assessment of the purpose of that alliance and what we're doing with it.

REP. BERMAN: (Inaudible.)

MR. KAGAN: Could I -- I just had a couple of -- one empirical point and one --

REP. BERMAN: And as you describe it -- since my time will run out -- answer -- deal with that, but also one point that you've triggered -- I forget what it was -- something on a cease-fire. Is it your understanding that compliance with the cease-fire is getting out of non-disputed parts of Georgia and (quit ?) fighting, or is it getting out -- Russians out of Southern Ossetia and Abkhazia?

MR. KAGAN: So -- on the first discussion, I just wanted to make sure we don't -- Ukraine and Georgia are very different. Ukraine -- Georgia had 30,000 troops, I think, before the fighting; Ukraine has 300,000 troops. And there's no pretext there, although I think we need to be -- and this gets to my answer to your second question -- we need to be forward-leaning on the diplomatic side, engaging with our friends in Kiev today, as we should have, in my opinion.

I frankly find it rather mysterious, with all due respect to my good friend Ambassador Fried, to hear the comments. Georgia is the most pro-American country in the world. Maybe Iranian people might be second. But having been to both of those places recently, this is a place where if we don't have leverage in dealing with our friends in Georgia, we have no leverage anywhere else. I'm perplexed, and I think we need to understand how we let our good allies make mistakes that we now are calling mistakes. And the same with Ukraine today -- what is happening with the government in Ukraine, in my opinion, is -- could not happen at a worse time -- the fighting between President Yushchenko and Prime Minister Tymoshenko. If they're our partners and they aspire to be our NATO alliance partners -- which I support -- they have to act like stable, responsible partners because what we're doing is we're creating the pretext. The pretext did not exist just two weeks ago. Now if you read the Russian press, they're talking about Yushchenko and military coups and all that, and it -- don't get me wrong -- you don't -- the pretext is a pretext on purpose. But we don't want -- we want to take that off the tables in both of these places. And leaning forward diplomatically rather than responding reactively with our defensive rearmament.

REP. BERMAN: Recognizing you haven't fully responded to that or answered my question, I'm going to cut myself off at a minute and twenty seconds over.

MR. KAGAN: (Laughs.) Okay.

REP. BERMAN: I will give the other people who were valiant enough to remain here the same time --

MR. KAGAN: And we'll come back at it.

REP. BERMAN: And we'll come back at it.

MR. KAGAN: Great.

REP. : Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to ask both of your questions dealing with Iran, like I had asked the ambassador.

Dr. McFaul, you say in your testimony that it is a misunderstanding to think that if we sort of go along with what Russia wants in Georgia we will be getting more help with Russia in dealing with Iran. Then if we basically acquiesce in the situation that Russia has created in Georgia, how do we anticipate specifically that we would be disappointed in our hopes that Russia would be more helpful regarding Iran?

And for you, Dr. Kagan, Russia's relationship with Iran is troubling and includes sales, as I had said, of advanced conventional weapons and nuclear technology.

And I came across an interesting op-ed in The Washington Times last Thursday wherein the author alleges that Georgia has had a quiet but substantial relationship with Israel, including a possible agreement that Israel might use Georgian airspace and maybe a couple of bases if and when Iran develops the nuclear capability and if and when Israel mounts the preemptive strike against that. So by invading Georgia and threatening to destabilize the current Georgian government, is Russia quietly again smoothing the path for Iran's development of nuclear weaponry?

Dr. McFaul?

MR. MCFAUL: So first on Iran -- I'm a student of Russian contemporary history but also Soviet history, and the idea that we can meet with them in New York and say, "Okay, we're going to be quiet about South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and you give us the vote" -- I actually -- I was thinking because I knew you were going to ask a question like this -- you or somebody -- and I was looking -- what is a precedent in Russian or Soviet history where this works? And I had a real hard time finding any precedent. I think it's naive. It's not the way our government works, so why should we think that it would be the way their government works -- this kind of tit-for-tat, we're going to trade this for that.

And I would invoke for you the person I think that understood this best of all, my colleague at Stanford, George Shultz. I think it's on page 276 of his memoirs, if you want to look it up, where he says very explicitly, this notion of linkage doesn't work in that kind of way. Russia is going to vote. We need to engage Russia to say why they -- you know, to understand, why would Russia have an interest in a nuclear Iran? And to have that dialogue, and to have a bigger, more interesting, more developed dialogue about that. I am all for that. But the notion that they're going to somehow give us a vote at the U.N. -- no. They're going to do exactly what you would expect your administration to do, which is to look hard at how they define their national interest and then vote accordingly, not as some favor to Russia or China or Iraq, or anybody for that matter.

REP. : Thank you, sir.

Dr. Kagan?

MR. KAGAN: Congresswoman, thank you.

On the question of Israel and Georgia, I have to say it's been astonishing to watch in general the Orwellian information operations campaign that the Russians have conducted trying to persuade the world that Georgia's 19,000 soldiers were a threat to the existence of the Russian empire, among other things -- but also the notion that this was all an Israeli plot, which was prominently spread initially by the South Ossetian separatist government and then picked up by elements of the Russian media, and in fact has been reported as a U.S.-Israeli plot to provide us or somebody with the bases from which to hit Iran and so forth. Of course, in the world one can never rule out possibilities and I don't know, but it's one of the most absurd suggestions that I've ever heard. It flies in the face of the fact that Israelis actually canceled the defense agreement that they had made with Georgia previous to this; flies in the face of the fact that Georgia is not a great place to base anything from if you're trying to hit Bushehr, which is kind of a long way away, and then neither we nor the Israelis would need to do that. So I think that's unlikely.

Your larger question about Russia smoothing Iran's path I think is a very important question and it's something we need to get into the heart of -- this whole question, and obviously this is the forum for it. What exactly has Russia been doing for us, vis-a-vis Iran? Russia has been providing Iran with nuclear equipment. Russia has been blocking the imposition of sanctions with teeth and in general dragging its feet. Russia has publicly supported Iran's right to a nuclear program, which is basically code in Tehran for a weapons program -- even though the Russians say that they're not in favor of that, the Russians are planning to provide the Iranians apparently with S-300 advanced surface-to-air missiles and so forth. I know that's been denied in the press, but frankly lots of things are denied in the press -- and so on. So what they've exactly been doing is unclear.

What is clear is that if you look at the reaction in the caucuses and in that region, it's very straightforward that the Iranians laid pretty low, the Armenians laid very low, the Azeris immediately left to denounce the Russian invasion -- why? Because there is in fact something of an axis that goes from Baku to Tbilisi to Kiev of states that feel themselves threatened by Russia and look to the West. And then there is a Russia -- I don't want to include Armenia because I don't want to imply that more than is fair, but a Russia-Tehran axis at any event, which works the other way. As we look at this, we need to decide -- this is, I'm afraid, a battle for the caucuses. And for a variety of reasons, it matters to us who wins, and I think we shouldn't mistake that.

REP. : Thank you very much, gentlemen.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. BERMAN: The gentleman from American Samoa.

DEL. ENI FALEOMAVAEGA (D-American Samoa): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I do want to thank both gentlemen for being so patient. They've been sitting here all afternoon and listening to all the questions and the dialogue with Secretary Fried.

I do have a couple of questions -- just wanted to get your opinions on. I noticed that the People's Republic of China and members of the Shanghai Agreement have taken the position of not supporting Russia in this recent aggression against Georgia. Does that give a positive indication in terms of -- it seems that even its closest allies being in the region -- that this didn't come out very positive for Russia. Can you -- care to comment on that -- either of you?

MR. MCFAUL: Well, I think it's -- first of all, I learned a lot sitting here listening to your questions with Secretary Fried, so I appreciate -- for the lesson.

I think it's very important. I think it's fundamentally important that it was China, that it was the Shanghai cooperation -- agreement -- the group that did not -- none of them -- and Russia went there. The president went there to get the acquiescence and they did not get it. And I think that sends a message that this is not like these other cases we were discussing earlier -- you all were discussing. And too, that Russia is really isolated.

And I -- this is going to give me a chance to say something I didn't in my initial remarks: we're not the only ones following this. There are Russians also following this. And it's not just my democratic opposition friends -- who, by the way, passed resolutions denouncing not only the -- what Russia did being not in Russia's national interest. Right? So there are voices saying, "We need to have a notion about this." But also denounced the illegality of what Russia did, both in using force and in recognizing these two territories. And by the way, it's not just the opposition -- it's the business elites. About \$300 billion has been lost on the Russian stock market since this has happened -- no, actually it's more than that -- \$600 (billion) or \$700 billion, and those that follow it closely say about \$300 (billion) is directly attributable to this war. So people are having this discussion and saying, just like the Chinese, just like in Azerbaijan, "Is this really in our interest as Russians?"

DEL. FALEOMAVAEGA: Dr. Kagan?

MR. KAGAN: I think it's very clear that this action that the Russians have taken has strained Russia's relationship with every country that Russia has a relationship with, and it has imposed a very interesting set of cross-strains, both on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and also on the Commonwealth of Independent States whose significance, I think, has been revealed to be the zero that one might have thought.

I think that -- I'm of the opinion that the statement of the SCO was less of a slap to the Russians than some might imagine. I have a hard time believing that Putin thought that the Chinese would back him publicly in this regard, given China's own issues. So I wouldn't imagine that he looked for that. And the statement itself is actually rather balanced and nuanced. The slap part got a lot of play in the Western press, but the rest of it is -- there is support for Russia there, too.

DEL. FALEOMAVAEGA: (Inaudible.

)

MR. KAGAN: I think that what surprised the Russians is that the Kazakhs and the Belorussians, whom they had thought would be tame lapdogs, have still not recognized, and I think that's an indication to them that the states of the former Soviet Union are looking at this and saying, "Hey, are we really going back to that or what?"

DEL. FALEOMAVAEGA: Well, one thing that I wanted just to ask both of you gentlemen, then -- taken collectively or the summation of the whole period since the collapse of the former Soviet Union and having these states now, do you think that maybe our country could have done a better job in working with the new Russia, in terms -- because it seems that we're treating Russia from the very beginning like really not part of the club, so to speak. We haven't invited them to join NATO even though we're making these conditions -- preconditions before they even get to another level.

And I'm just wondering maybe we may have missed the ball somewhere along the line, because I kind of like to think that they really are trying to reach out. And I mentioned President Medvedev's speech in Berlin -- I thought it was very profound, and it seemed to me that he really wants to reach out and not be treated like (it ?) was another enemy since the Cold War. I may be wrong, but my general observation is that we've built a missile defense supposedly for defense purposes in Czech -- Poland. We somehow are not communicating here. Maybe it's because I don't speak Russian, but I just wanted to ask your opinions, gentlemen. Do you think that maybe our country could have done a better job in really bringing Russia into the mainstream of the world? After all, they are having -- they do have a democracy, but still, they're building on it.

REP. : Can you yield for one second?

REP. FALEOMAVAEGA: Please.

REP. : When you check out the speeches -- you mentioned Medvedev's -- check out the Putin's speech in Munich about two years ago. That was a -- that was also profound in a way.

REP. FALEOMAVAEGA: I definitely will look at Putin's speech.

REP. : Okay.

REP. FALEOMAVAEGA: Gentlemen?

MR. KAGAN: I'm going to race the buzzer.

REP. BERMAN: No, we're being laxer.

MR. KAGAN: (Laughs.) First of all, I think -- Medvedev made another speech and gave an interview on August 31st in which he laid out the five principles that govern Russian foreign

policy, and one of those principles is that Russia has a sphere of influence which includes the territories of the former Soviet Union and everybody else needs to keep out. And it was as clear a statement of a Russian Monroe Doctrine as you can desire. And so Medvedev plays different speeches to different audiences -- rather better than Putin, by the way, who is rather monotonous. And I was there, Congressman Berman, at the Verkunde where he made that speech, and it peeled the paint off the walls.

But on the general point, I think that -- I personally think that we probably could have done more in the 1990s to reach out to the Russians, and I was actually watching from afar, not happy with some of the decisions that were made, and particularly some of the rather condescending and hectoring tone that we used toward the Russians and toward Yeltsin's Russia, which was clearly trying to move in the right direction. And I was also -- and I'll be honest with you -- I was skeptical about the wisdom of expanding NATO precisely because of the question of whether we were prepared to back the Article 5 guarantees that we were extending.

What I want to say, though, is, unfortunately we are where we are. And whereas I think that we might have had more luck with Yeltsin's Russia, I don't think we ever really had a chance with Putin's Russia. And the problem with some of the discussions we've had about the desirability of NATO expansion or this or that is that we've done it. We have expanded NATO, and the new NATO states -- which aren't that new anymore, in the Balts -- identify their security interests with the security interests of Georgia, and they've done that explicitly, among other things calling for Georgian accession to NATO.

So although I agree with you that we can go back and look at errors that were made in the past, I think unfortunately it doesn't help us inform future policy decisions.

REP. FALEOMAVAEGA: (Inaudible) -- Dr. McFaul?

MR. MCFAUL: If I could just add a couple of ideas. I've written a whole book about it, so I'll send it to you.

Two and a half big themes: One is, we could have done more, and I agree. And that's what the book is about -- that we did not, in a way, like Fred was mentioning today -- that in a way we didn't realize the bigness of the moment at the collapse of the Soviet Union. If you remember, we were in an election year soon after that, and the phrase that won the election was "It's the economy, stupid." Right? It wasn't like 1946 or 1947 or '48, where we thought if we could just integrate this struggling democracy seeking to create democratic institutions and market institutions and integrate into the West -- we didn't have the big strategy. And I think -- and a variety of reasons in the book I could tell you -- partly that's our fault.

But second, it's not all our fault. I don't think it's just a coincidence that as Russia has become increasingly autocratic -- I do not consider Russia today a democracy. And as it has become increasingly autocratic, it has become more belligerent -- not only towards democracies on its borders, but towards the West and the United States. And that is a fact that's bigger than just Russia. That -- understanding that fundamental relationship that we sometimes get confused about -- that I think we could have saw coming.

And by the way, I wrote about it eight years ago -- under the Clinton administration, just to be clear -- and I was reprimanded by Secretary Albright for the day the piece came out when I said, "We're not paying enough attention to this." So it's a nonpartisan comment that I'm making. But that was eight years ago, and the fact that we did not focus on this, that we let the relationship drift, that we got focused on other security interests and that we don't have much -- so when we get to August 6, 2008 and you look at, well, what's left in the bilateral relationship? There's not a lot of there there. And so Russia and the Russian leadership -- I want to make clear, because Russia didn't decide; the Russian leadership did -- when they made the decision to go into Georgia, the stakes -- the negative stakes in terms of our bilateral relationship -- were actually rather low. And that I do think is our responsibility as well.

REP. FALEOMAVAEGA: I'll look forward to reading the book.

MR. MCFAUL: I'll send you a copy for free.

REP. FALEOMAVAEGA: Thank you.

REP. BERMAN: Mr. Payne, for as much time as he may consume. (Laughter.)

REP. DONALD PAYNE (D-NJ): Well, no, no. We won't do that.

REP. BERMAN: Up to about eight or nine minutes.

REP. PAYNE: Thank you very much.

You know, the fact that it did appear as though what the -- when the USSR broke up and there was a new Europe, it appeared to me that there was opportunities to try to perhaps embrace Russia. It seemed, though, that there began an increased NATO enlargement; you know, later, the missile shields. And was there ever in your -- either one of your opinions -- a thought that there could be normal relations, that Russia maybe 25 years from now could possibly be a big ally like Western Europe was at one time, or was there, in your opinion, always the fear that you're just going to have to contain these Russians -- they're just a czarist, mean, evil people? I mean, what do you think? Where did we fail? Listening to some of your talk, you know, it sounds like the '60s with Khrushchev and Kennedy and (batting the heel ?) on the U.N. We're going to -- you know, this war thing is a serious thing.

And I hear all this really tough talk -- "We need to do to this," and "Let's put the missiles there now." I mean, I'm not so sure that Americans are -- want to just -- "Let's take on another war." You know, we've got our hands full, as you know, in Iraq. And then we're looking at Iran. No one's even thought about -- (inaudible) -- China. I mean, you know, we need to reassess this 1890, 1900 U.S. and the world, and you know, maybe there -- we should remain strong and have this common defense and a strong country. But I'm not so sure that the stuff we're talking about is going to fly in the next 20, 30, 40, 50 years. You know, I don't even know how we're going to afford it. A billion dollars for 5 million people - - suppose something happens to a hundred-million people country. Do we give them \$50 billion?

MR. MCFAUL: If I may first -- I absolutely believed and continue to believe in the future that there's no reason why Russia can't be a strong ally of the United States. And in the '90s when there was a democratic Russia and when Boris Yeltsin was leaning forward, these peacekeepers that we now have to call alleged peacekeepers -- they were peacekeepers, and they were peacekeepers because the policy of Moscow was fundamentally different in Abkhazia and South Ossetia at the time.

REP. PAYNE: Why do you think it changed? I mean --

MR. MCFAUL: Because Mr. Putin is not -- you know, whether we're to blame or he's to blame, but he's fundamentally given up on two projects that were alive 20 years ago: One, democracy in Russia, and he's rolled it back 100 percent, and let's have no illusions about that. And two, integration into the West -- and he doesn't believe that anymore. He believes that -- in my opinion -- you know, I've followed this gentleman very -- I met him in 1992, just so you know. I met him a long time ago -- 1991, actually. In my opinion, he has a very classic 19th century notion of Russian power. And so when -- it's the military, you know. There's a famous slogan in Russia -- it doesn't have any allies but its military and its navy, and he would now add Gazprom. Right? So Gazprom is not a company seeking to maximize -- I don't know if you have any shares in Gazprom, Congressman, but it's not to make you wealthy. It's to exercise Russian power. And that's the way he thinks, and that's fundamentally different than the leadership that was in power in Russia 15 years ago.

I also want to report, though, that it is not consensus, the way Mr. Putin thinks, inside Russia today. Even -- I would dare say even within the Russian government today there is a real division about what -- you know, the cost-benefit analysis of where "Mr. Putin's war", as they call it, is taking Russia. And if we had that relationship then we could do missile defense cooperatively. That's an idea that's 20 years old, by the way. If we had that cooperation then Russia could actually do important things in a military alliance of some sort with the United States. They have assets that could be very important to us.

So I don't -- I never want to keep that -- and I'm really glad you brought it up, because -- well, you can tell I'm a little passionate about it. You know, this notion that somehow there's a genetic code for imperialism -- you know that's the stuff my grandfather's generation said about Germans and Japanese. That is not useful in terms of understanding Russia today.

MR. KAGAN: I want to violently agree with that. I've been studying Russia one way or another almost all my life, and like Mike and unlike some of my colleagues in the field, I like Russians. And I did think that in the 1990s there was a real possibility for the development of a strategic partnership, and I was one of those people who were running around saying, you know, the U.S. and Russia have no interest in conflict in the world and there's no reason why we should -- we have many interests in concert. And as Russian democracy was developing, it seemed to me that the window toward normalization was opening, and I very much wanted to see it that way.

And I have to tell you that I've been feeling this sort of a personal pain as I've now had to go through reading Russian military websites, which before I had been reading just to sort of see what was the Russian take on things and, you know, treating Russia like any other state,

and now have to look at them as a state that has attacked and invaded the territory of our ally. I actually find it emotionally distressing, I have to tell you. So I'm not here beating the drum for war with Russia, A -- I don't want to fight a war with Russia. And B, I'm not here with any enthusiasm along anti-Russian lines. I think Cannon was wrong. I think the problem was the Soviet Union; it wasn't Russia. I've written a book that I will not send you because you would find it very boring about how Russia actually did not have the sort of imperialistic designs even in the 19th century that are commonly attributed to it. And so I totally agree with Mike that that's not the deal.

But the problem is that we are dealing with -- we don't deal with peoples; we deal with leaders. And in Putin, we're dealing with an ex-KGB thug who has very much of a KGB mind-set about the world and Russia's place in it. This is a guy who has mourned the loss of the Soviet Union -- which is a remarkable statement in itself if you think about it -- and clearly has designs. Mike is right: They're not unanimous designs of the Russian people. But we've had this conversation before, too.

If what you -- if what we want to do -- and I think this is all of our objective, is to find a way to work Russia back into being a constructive partner and a member of the world community, then you need to strike the right balance, of course. But you can't reward the aggressor; and you can't allow the aggressor to benefit; and you need to show that there is a price; and you need to show that the next thing will be harder, and something that really doesn't want to happen.

And that's why I think concept of deterrence and containment come back here. But the objective is not to isolate Russia, or make this government fall, or anything like that. The objective is, of course, to work Russia back onto the path of a normal relationship.

REP. PAYNE: Thank you very much. My time's expired. But, you know, I thought that with the prosperity in Russia things would, you know, improve. I visited Russia in 1967, and you talk about a poor country -- went down the Don River, and the Volga River, down from Rostov all the way to the south for two or three weeks. And you would think that with the new economics, that they would appreciate the quality of life that it brings. But, I'll yield -- I'll yield back the balance of my time, Mr. Chairman.

REP. BERMAN: And now, in what will surely be a historical novelty, Mr. Rohrabacher, bring us the perspective of Russia that you've been -- (inaudible) --

REP. ROHRABACHER: All right, well, listen, I, again, don't have to remind people that my anti-Soviet credentials are -- (inaudible) -- (doubt?). I'm one of the few people that I know that actually engaged with Soviet troops during the Cold War. And let's just note that this is not the Soviet Union. And I think, to the degree that we can't change the mind-set of some people to understand that the Cold War is over, that it has contributed greatly to the negative relationship that we have now.

This is not just 'a KGB thug now came up, and because he's a bad guy, our relationship is going to hell.' No. Russia was wide open to being our friends. And, like you say, there was --

all of the interests of both of our countries is to work together. And, systematically, we froze Russia out of our markets.

The EU, of course, never let the Russians in their markets, even as looters from the West flooded into Russia making themselves partners with Russian crooks. And so patriots in Russia were able to look and see their country being looted by foreigners who had made deals with their own corrupt elements in their own society. Where's that going to leave a patriot?

This isn't even a negative nationalism at play here in Russia. It's people who believe in their country. You just said that "we can't let aggression -- we can't let -- we can't make sure that aggression is awarded." Well, what is the Russian -- what are the Russians to think about that? We have what we know, absolutely, the Georgians were the ones who broke the truce. They committed the aggression. They went in and killed 150 Ossetians. And what is it -- the Ossetians are a separate ethnic, that have a different language, do either one of you believe that the majority of Ossetian people do not want to be independent of Georgia, in a free election -- that that's what they would choose?

Everybody understands the Ossetians want to be free and independent. Just like the Kosovars. So, are we -- are the Russians going to sit down and let aggression be awarded (sic) by letting the Georgians come in there and slaughter a group of Ossetians who want -- just want, basically, their own self-determination, just like the Kosovars?

I can identify with that because I supported the Kosovars.

I thought it was a good idea for us to use military might to defeat the Serbs, who were down there ready to kill the Kosovars and to eliminate their right of self-determination. What the Russians see -- what we've got right now, we have turned Russia into an enemy with hostility and double standards, as well as -- and part of that hostility is keeping them out our Western markets. We need them -- if we're going to have peace in the world, we need the Russians on our side.

I sat next the Ronald Reagan a half a dozen times when Ronald Reagan said, "This missile defense system we're talking about, the Russians should be our partners. And if they ever get them out of Eastern Europe, that's what we're going to do. We're going to make them our partners in building a missile defense system that will protect all of us." He said that a half a dozen times.

And instead, what did this administration do? It moved forward in missile defense and then, *fait accompli*, announces, 'oh, yes, we're going to put it up on your border,' and expect them not to, not to think that that's a hostile act? It's our hostility, and not Russian hostility, that's being manifested right now in our relationship with Russia.

And I'm an American patriot. I want what's best for my country. And I do not blame Russian patriots. I was against the Soviet Union because it was being run by people who were ideologically being driven because they hated America's democratic and capitalistic

system. But as you say, that's not true of the Russian people at all. They've got good hearts and they're good people.

I don't know about the nature of Putin. He may be a real bad guy, or he might be a -- he might be just a patriot reacting to the looting of his country. And you're very welcome to refute --

REP. BERMAN: The issue has been joined.

REP. ROHRABACHER: (Laughs.) (Inaudible.)

MR. MCFAUL: If I may -- so, I'm also an American patriot. I've also lived in the Soviet Union, or Russia, for several years of my life. Some of my closest personal friends -- in my Blackberry, on speed-dial, are Russians. Okay?

REP. ROHRABACHER: Great.

MR. MCFAUL: All right. This is not about Russians and Americans. It's about the Russian government, in my opinion.

Just a couple of reactions. I too, before you got here -- I also think it was a really ill-considered notion. And it's in my written testimony what happened in Tskhinvali. I think that's a mistake. That was a mistake. There were civilians that were lost. We should have an investigation of that, and we should acknowledge that.

Having said that -- one should be able to say that first, and then say, secondly, it is not right for a country to invade another country and then to unilaterally dismember it. We should be able to have those two thoughts together. And, in my opinion, the first does not justify the second. Moreover --

REP. ROHRABACHER: Are we -- you're suggesting we're trying to -- that the Russians are trying to dismantle Georgia?

MR. MCFAUL: Yes, I am --

(Cross talk)

MR. MCFAUL: -- I'm not suggesting -- (inaudible) --

(Cross talk.)

REP. ROHRABACHER: I mean, you're not -- you're not --

(Cross talk.)

REP. ROHRABACHER: -- you're not saying -- you're not just saying Ossetia and these two, these two breakaway regions, where people don't want to be part of Georgia, --

MR. MCFAUL: Well, let me just --

REP. ROHRABACHER: -- don't speak Georgian, that that is dismantling their country?

MR. MCFAUL: Well, let -- well, let's get to those two places. First of all, --

REP. ROHRABACHER: As compared to Kosovo.

MR. MCFAUL: First of all, before Russia invaded Georgia, every country in the world recognized those two territories, including the Russian Federation -- recognized those two territories as part of Georgia. There's not a single country in the world that ever recognized -- (inaudible) -- independence.

Second, we have to go back a little bit in history. Do you know -- because you were asking the rhetorical questions, let me ask you, do you know how many Abkhazians lived in Georgia, in Abkhazia, in, say, 1989 or 1990?

REP. ROHRABACHER: Abkhazians lived in Abkhazia --

MR. MCFAUL: In the -- in the state of --

REP. ROHRABACHER: -- or in Georgia?

MR. MCFAUL: -- Abkhazia, how many were there?

REP. ROHRABACHER: I'm not sure, but I -- (inaudible) --

MR. MCFAUL: I know. Eighteen percent.

REP. ROHRABACHER: Oh, I didn't what percent -- (inaudible) --

MR. MCFAUL: Right. So, there was -- there were 82 percent were non-ethnic Abkhaz. Right?

REP. ROHRABACHER: Right.

MR. MCFAUL: So, what happened to them? There was ethnic cleansing in Abkhazia. That was recognized --

REP. ROHRABACHER: That's correct.

MR. MCFAUL: -- if I may remind us all, at the (OSCE ?) -- (inaudible) --

REP. ROHRABACHER: It's exactly the same argument that the Serbs used against the Kosovars -- just exactly.

MR. MCFAUL: Well, I just -- I just find it -- (inaudible) --

REP. ROHRABACHER: Exactly the same argument. Exactly the same argument.

MR. MCFAUL: No. Well with --

REP. ROHRABACHER: What you have to do is decide who's there today. And, unfortunately, that's -- you can't make up for all these past errors. And I agree with you, there was a -- there was conflict, and that conflict was started because Joseph Stalin decided to make those borders, and put Abkhazia and these countries together, under the Georgians, because he was a Georgian.

And is there any --

REP. BERMAN: Will the gentleman yield?

(Cross talk.)

MR. MCFAUL: If I could just finish -- (inaudible) --

(Cross talk.)

REP. ROHRABACHER: Yeah?

REP. BERMAN: Do the Kurds, who were thrown out of Mosul by Saddam Hussein have a right to participate in the future of Mosul?

REP. ROHRABACHER: I would suggest that when we do elections in this world, because of the complications that you're just -- that are inherent with what we're talking about, that we have to talk about elections based on people who live in a territory right now.

And I know that that -- that that's not justice for everybody in the world, but it's something, but it's a workable way of moving forward.

MR. MCFAUL: Well, I just respectfully disagree.

REP. ROHRABACHER: Okay -- (inaudible) --

MR. MCFAUL: And I would just remind you that the government of Georgia recognized the ethnic cleansing that I'm talking about at three OSCE meetings in the 1990s. This does not go back to the 13th century. This is something that just happened a decade ago. And those displaced people are still living in Georgia. So, it's -- I don't think -- (inaudible) --

REP. ROHRABACHER: Okay, maybe you can answer, because you're an expert on this, how many -- before Stalin put these, put these provinces into Georgia, how many of them were Georgians then? How many -- how many were native to the, to the ethnic group, and --

MR. MCFAUL: I think that a substantial majority were -- it was a mix, by the way, it's not just Georgians and Abkhaz, there are about --

REP. ROHRABACHER: Right.

MR. MCFAUL: -- six different ethnic groups there. But, my point is, one, I don't see the parallel at all to Kosovo. We were using our force to stop ethnic cleansing; the Russians were using their force to promote it.

But, second, where do you stop? So, Chechnya, do they get a state? Does Dagestan get a state? Do the --

REP. ROHRABACHER: Well, I happen to --

(Cross talk.)

MR. MCFAUL: -- (inaudible) --

REP. ROHRABACHER: -- I happen to believe -- (to answer your question ?), and I don't think I'm speaking for anybody, I happen to believe that we should be on the side of self-determination. And we should just hunker down and say, okay, this is the principle we believe in. And, in the end, it'll make us many more friends around the world than if we decide, 'no, we're going to support any country that tries to suppress an ethnic group that's trying to break away,' even if that ethnic group was put in that country by Joseph Stalin, or some colonialist.

REP. BERMAN: Russians in Kazakhstan?

REP. ROHRABACHER: What was that?

REP. BERMAN: Russians in Kazakhstan have a right to --

REP. ROHRABACHER: The Russians gave up Kazakhstan, (did they not ?)?

MR. MCFAUL: No, but the 40 percent, or 38 percent of ethnic Russians that live in Kazakhstan, if they want to declare their own state. I guess I'd -- we just disagree. I mean --

REP. ROHRABACHER: Okay.

MR. MCFAUL: -- I think your scenario leads to, you know, that what we saw in the Balkans, but with countries with nuclear weapons. And I think the -- the big dog that didn't bark, I'm struck by -- (inaudible) --

REP. ROHRABACHER: So, you were opposed to our efforts in Kosovo?

MR. MCFAUL: No, I supported it.

REP. ROHRABACHER: Oh, okay, well now -- (with a hint of sarcasm) --

MR. MCFAUL: No, but -- but, with all due respect, Congressman, one, was to stop ethnic cleansing. The Russian use of force in Georgia --

REP. ROHRABACHER: Right.

MR. MCFAUL: -- and it was not even supported by Boris Yeltsin, by the way -- was to promote ethnic cleansing. And I think we can't make those kind of a false parallels.

REP. ROHRABACHER: Okay, okay, if we're talking about analysis, and all this sinister talk that we hear from a -- from coming out of our leadership now about this horrible genocide -- (laughs) -- that the Russians were committing against Georgia, I got many, many briefs, or intelligence briefings on this in Europe during the break.

And I was very diligent on this, and I was talking to intelligence people from other areas. And they all suggested that the, that the Georgians who went into Ossetia killed more people than the Russians when they went into Georgia. More Georgians were slaughtering these other people, than the other way around.

REP. BERMAN: The time -- twice the time of the gentleman from California, with a few interruptions by me, has expired.

The gentleman from Massachusetts.

REP. DELAHUNT: I think the frustration that I hear from my good friend from California -- and the ranking member the subcommittee, which I chair, is that Putin's a thug and the Russians are the aggressor. And there's this almost dismissive, throw-away line about, 'well, they made a mistake' -- I'm referring to the Georgians; 'it was a tactical blunder.' And yet, when you read the reports coming out of South Ossetia, people were killed. Bodies were not moved because there was fear that if civilians went out, that Georgian soldiers would kill them.

I mean, I think, to quote a phrase, "the American people and members of Congress are not receiving a fair and balanced picture." Is Saakashvili a thug? Was he a thug during the elections when he closed down those TV stations; when he sent the riot police in? Who is Saakashvili?

Now, we know he's well-connected here in Washington. We know that Georgia has a very effective lobbyist in Mr. Scheunemann. I guess what I'm saying is, all I hear is this rather black and white depiction. And there's something -- my instincts say I'm getting a sales job.

And then I read stories about -- you know, from reporters whom I respect, and quotes -- this is from The New York Times, this is, again, referring to Saakashvili, "He made the return of the separatist areas to Georgian control a central plank of his platform;" "American officials said they repeatedly and bluntly told their Georgian counterparts that the Iraq mission should not be taken as a sign of American support, or as a prelude for, operations against the separatists."

I have this very uneasy feeling that because we get 2,000 Georgian troops, that was a message that to Saakashvili, and the so-called "inner circle around him," that he could really, you know, do some strutting, and had a swagger. And I think that was a very bad message to sell.

Is a group, the -- and I know both of you are aware of it, the International Crisis Group -- there's a group that I respect, I think their work is solid and good. And, you know, they do the pro forma criticism of Russia.

But, then they go on to say this, "Georgia too has mishandled its relationships with Russia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia since 2004, abandoning real confidence-building, and often following confrontational policies towards the conflict regions."

"With patience, it might have demonstrated that the regions would be better served by enjoying -- by enjoying extensive autonomy within an increasingly prosperous and democratizing Georgia. Instead, President Saakashvili and a small inner circle of bellicose officials used menacing and arrogant rhetoric that made the dispute with Moscow on the conflict regions bitter and personal. All sides bear responsibility for the humanitarian consequences of violence, as tens of thousands of civilians in these regions, and the rest of Georgia, have been displaced amid disturbing reports of atrocities."

I mean, who's Saakashvili? You know, I'm just really concerned that -- we heard testimony earlier from Secretary Fried, "Don't go in." He was ignored. They're in. And for that, we're going to reward them with a check for a billion dollars. That makes me very, very nervous. I don't know if that's the message that we want.

Now, there is groups within -- I think I alluded to this earlier, "a popular opposition member of parliament has called for an investigative commission; 80 organizations and individuals have signed a petition calling for a broad debate; and most opposition leaders refuse to sign a government pledge of unity," according to a newspaper. "Critics also accuse the government of dishonesty in its characterization of the war's income. Several have blasted the government for staging celebrations during and after the war; and for claiming the conflict was a international public relations victory, while blaming others for its failure."

I don't want to get involved in a public relations war. I always remember, you know, Ahmed Chalabi saying, well, you know, they were heroes in error. Enough. I don't want to go down that route anymore. And I don't want to write a check out for a billion dollars for someone whom, it appear to me, there are serious questions about his judgment. Are we going to ally ourselves with someone whom -- certainly ignored this administration that has been very supportive of, and went in.

And we talk about Russia being an aggressor. You know, Mr. Rohrabacher is correct. Who lit the match? I know it's not an academic policy issue, but it's the question that most Americans will probably ask if they understood that Georgia was a country, and not where Atlanta and Savannah are situated. Who started this? It's really kind of common sense. Who started this all? It's gray.

You know, I'm more -- I'm willing to advocate for the U.N., or some independent international body to go in and do a independent enquiry, if that can be accomplished. But, how about some facts? How about some real thorough review: Were the tanks in the tunnel? If (we'd ?) listened to Mr. Fried, "well, they told us that they believed."

You know, we've heard great strategies before, we've read a lot of books, and we ended up in Iraq as a result -- a gathering storm, and weapons of mass destruction. This is about war and peace; this about money that we don't have; this is about 'let's do this in a thoughtful, measured way.' No, we're not all Georgians. I represent the United States. I represent the American people, and I'm interested in our national security.

And, Mr. McFaul, would you care to comment?

MR. MCFAUL: I have many comments, and you're going to tell me when I'm done. A couple of things: I share your concern about what -- the decisions that Mr. Saakashvili made. I have them in my testimony where I say very clearly, irrespective of who moved to escalate, the Georgian government's decision to use military force to assert its sovereignty over South Ossetia -- which included sending its forces into the South Ossetian capital, Tskhinvali, was short-sighted and ill-considered. We have no disagreement about that. That's the first thing I would say.

The second thing I would say, I am delighted that the folks you cited inside Georgia are beginning to speak up and having a debate. And that's a good sign and a healthy sign about Georgian democracy. When I was at the convention in Denver a couple weeks ago, there was a Georgian delegation there that did not just represent Mr. Saakashvili. And at an appropriate time and place -- the country, after all, is under military assault; there needs to be an appropriate time and place -- they're going to have that discussion. I'm very optimistic about that. And I would hope you would all do the things necessary to help them to have the instruments to do it.

For instance, independent media -- as you rightly said about three hours ago, is under assault in Georgia. And what happened in November, there's no excuse for it, in my opinion. And so we should be supporting independent media in Georgia so that they can have that debate. And I think that's a healthy thing. And the Georgian people should, one day, have the right -- and they will, because they live in a democracy. Unlike, in Russia, they're going to have a say about what happens.

The only other thing I would say is, it's not just enough to figure out who shot first. I've looked at this very closely. I grew up in a town called Butte, Montana -- I don't know if anybody's been to Butte, Butte's a pretty rough town. All right, good. So, you know -- (responding to someone who's been there). Well, I grew up with a couple of guys called "Eddie and the fishlips." They were bullies. And every day when I walked home from school, they came up to me and they taunted me. And they were trying to pick a fight.

And my mother said, don't swing, you know, unless you know that you can take on those three. Don't be an idiot, in other words. Well, one day I was an idiot, and they beat the hell out of me. That, I think, is the right analogy here. To think that somehow Russia has just

been sitting by quietly, waiting to defend the poor South Ossetians -- which, by the way, is a giant police state, thug state, trafficking, human trafficking, I mean, we haven't even talked about what South Ossetia really is. Just picking up the -- (inaudible) --

REP. DELAHUNT: I presume it's like our other ally, Uzbekistan.

MR. MCFAUL: Much, much worse than Uzbekistan.

REP. DELAHUNT: Really?

MR. MCFAUL: As somebody who was kicked out of Uzbekistan many years ago, much, much worse. Which is to say, they have been -- they've been wanting this fight for a long time. Which is no excuse for what Saakashvili did, don't get me wrong.

REP. DELAHUNT: Okay.

MR. MCFAUL: Those two -- but we have to be able to separate those two things. Russia's been wanting to do this. They've had their sanctions -- (inaudible) --

REP. DELAHUNT: Mr. McFaul, I don't disagree with you. Okay, I agree -- and I (have to ?) because I -- to be honest, I'm not as, obviously, as conversant with the region. You know, I don't have that -- the breadth of knowledge that, for example, the chairman of the full committee has on this particular issue.

REP. BERMAN: (Laughs.)

REP. DELAHUNT: So, I have to accept a lot of what you're saying. I will make the effort to immerse myself and understand this, okay. But, what I'm seeing, as an observer, and somebody who has to cast a vote --

MR. MCFAUL: Yeah.

REP. DELAHUNT: -- is an unbalanced perspective here. And it sounds to me an awful lot like -- as Mr. Rohrabacher said earlier, "Russian bashing," because it's in vogue. Let's be honest about -- (inaudible) --

MR. MCFAUL: If I could -- one small point, it's very important.

REP. DELAHUNT: -- (inaudible) -- Putin -- Putin bashing.

MR. MCFAUL: What we really need to look at is the missed diplomatic mistakes before the war.

REP. DELAHUNT: Well, that's what I --

MR. MCFAUL: That is -- and that, by the way, we all knew it. Senator Obama said it many times, on the record, that this war is going to happen; Georgia is going to -- you know,

should not take the bait. That discussion -- and that I put upon you to explore that, because that, to me, is the real failure. We're paying for our failed diplomacy with that billion-dollar check. This could have been avoided, in my opinion.

REP. BERMAN: I thank you, Mr. Delahunt, for a segue into the question that I would like to get into.

For a long time -- a couple years -- (inaudible) -- since I became chairman, before that I was thinking about fair use of intellectual property -- (laughter) -- I've been thinking, has our policy to Russia been handled right? I agree with what you're saying. I see (as a thugger's?) behavior; I see the reporters getting assassinated; I see the NGOs being stifled; I see the -- at least the television Press being taken over by the government. And it's very depressing.

But, I see the administration's policies -- (inaudible) -- I call it, sort of, stovepiping, and maybe that's unfair. Well, we like missile defense -- we've loved missile defense. It's a -- almost a religious thing. Iran could have nuclear weapons; certainly is getting missile technology. Let's use our missile defense to stop those nuclear-tipped missiles. And, yeah -- and there's a reason to deploy them where we're talking about deploying, but the Russian feelings about that don't make that much sense.

Kosovo is a critical humanitarian issue, I think. I don't think it is the equivalent of the situation Abkhazia and South Ossetia. But, I know there are going to be consequences from it. What are we doing to deal with those consequences? Because -- and it gets back to -- for me, it gets back a lot to Iran. Because Iran, with a nuclear weapons capability -- both because who's in control of Iraq, because what that will mean for Iranian efforts of hegemony in that part of the world, and for the reason that once Iran goes, a number of other countries are going to now seriously focus on getting nuclear weapons.

Iran, in some ways, is the most urgent and -- maybe it's not immediate, but it's closer to immediate than most other things around. And I hear you say, this has nothing to do Iran, they'll do in Iran what they want to do; and, we should never reward aggression; and, don't kid ourselves into thinking that -- And I don't want to reward aggression; and I don't, and I don't think Georgia and Russia are morally equivalent in this case; and I do think we have to stand up, and that's where I do think we have to provide this assistance.

But, in Iraq our military paid off -- and I think it was a brilliant and right move, paid off some people who had been involved in trying to kill American soldiers -- taking advantage of their own disaffection with al-Qaeda in Iraq, and doing a kind of thing that would have put any of us in jail with their "walking around" money, to help build support for -- we rewarded some people who'd done some evil things for a greater good.

World War II is a classic example of making book with Stalin when the Germans finally (double crossed?) -- (inaudible) --, and to stop the Nazis. I could agree with everything you say about Russia now, and still think the importance of some of these other issues, one has to think about the relationship of all of them. Maybe on some issues you don't give. You don't turn your back on Georgia after what's happened. But maybe there are other aspects of it where you pull your punches a little bit in order to achieve a bigger goal.

We know that Russia and Iran have never -- have always had a historical tension. We know that Russia knows it's not in their national interest for Iran to get nuclear weapons. They may not -- they may be more interested -- and maybe Russia exists -- I said that in my opening statement, maybe Russia exists simply to thwart -- I mean, they're so upset about the humiliations they went through; our role in contributing to them; -- (inaudible) -- some of the issues Dana mentioned in the 1990s; you mentioned that their anger at a unipolar world, and that nothing we do will get them. And that's -- that's what (this search ?) is all -- is partly about, because if there is nothing that will get them on our side, then that ought to be our frame of reference.

But if, to some extent, we've contributed, or not done things well enough to maximize the chance of them helping us -- and I think their help is absolutely essential, unless it's -- this is going to be a military issue with Iran, but I think their help is absolutely essential. Maybe there are ways -- (inaudible) -- we could work through that relationship with Russia better, to achieve our goals.

And so, in addition to what's happened to the Georgian people, and what happened to a nascent democracy, part of what depresses me about the events of this summer is it sort of put -- it seems to me to have put the nail in the coffin of that kind of collaboration on Iran, and one non-military way I saw of forcing an Iranian change of behavior is lost.

And so I guess -- have I used my --? Yes, I have, but I'm getting twice time, now, so I would be interested in your reaction and in the course I would like to get back to that earlier question about what a ceasefire versus moving their forces out of southern Abkhazia, southern -- South Ossetia and Abkazia. What is our standard here as we move ahead in dealing with Russia -- what is the European standard? Okay.

MR. MCFAUL: Congressman -- sorry -- on the last point I think it's important to understand that the Russians recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia is itself a violation of the Six-Point Agreement.

REP. BERMAN: That's what I wanted to -- the recognition.

MR. MCFAUL: The recognition.

REP. BERMAN: But the forces in -- it seemed to me the ceasefire was fuzzy about that.

MR. MCFAUL: It depends on what the -- well, I mean --

REP. BERMAN: Meaning of is is. No.

MR. MCFAUL: No, it's not, actually. I mean, the problem with the ceasefire is that the ceasefire itself was de facto the Russian ultimatum to Georgia which our good friend, Mr. Sarkozy presented at a compromise, but in fact it was not. And it was virtually dictated by the Russians. It did not contain in it provisions addressing the question of Georgian peacekeepers in Abkhazia or South Ossetia, which the Russians dispelled and which the

Russians have now said won't come back. So this is not actually a ceasefire in the sense of any sort of return to status --

REP. BERMAN: But then there's a clarification of the ceasefire --

MR. MCFAUL: We clarified which the Russians rejected -- and the Russians have stated repeatedly they would not tolerate the presence of Georgia -- excuse me -- they've stated repeatedly the South Ossetians and Abkhazians will not tolerate the presence of Georgia.

REP. BERMAN: So the recognition violates the ceasefire because --

MR. MCFAUL: Yes, sir.

REP. BERMAN: And tell me why.

MR. MCFAUL: Because the sixth point of that agreement is that --

REP. BERMAN: Counter to our -- (inaudible.)

MR. MCFAUL: -- the signature status of the Sarkozy-Medvedev agreement is that the future status of those two areas would be determined through international negotiation.

REP. BERMAN: Okay.

MR. MCFAUL: And when the Russians unilaterally recognized them then that was not a result of a -- that's a violation, which of course is in contrast with what happened in Kosovo as has been pointed out.

And also I think it's important to point out that the interesting -- one of the interesting things about Kosovo, it was not a unilateral American action -- it was a multilateral action. We did it concert with the Europeans. At various points of the negotiation, we had to lead by the Europeans. This is being -- you know, it's portrayed as an American action -- in fact, it was a Western action which the Russians chose to resist and you know, we can have a conversation about --

REP. MANZULLO: Mr. Chairman, could I ask you for a clarification on that one point? Did the Russians recognize Ossetia before or after the truce was broken when the Georgians invaded Ossetia?

MR. MCFAUL: Congressman, with all respect, the truce was broken when the Russian so-called peacekeepers allowed South Ossetian militias to attack Georgians both in South Ossetia and outside of Georgia.

REP. MANZULLO: Okay. Because --

MR. MCFAUL: And therefore -- and you might also say --

REP. POE (?): So can we go back to my original question -- my -- did the recognition of Ossetia happen after the Georgian army entered Ossetia or before?

MR. MCFAUL: It happened --

REP. MANZULLO: It was in violation of the ceasefire.

MR. MCFAUL: It happened afterward.

REP. MANZULLO: It happened afterwards. Thank you.

MR. KAGAN: In other words -- there's -- also we're talking about different ceasefires. There was a 1994 ceasefire --

MR. MCFAUL: That's right.

MR. KAGAN: But if you're talking about the Sarkozy ceasefire --

MR. MCFAUL: It happened after that and while the Russians were still in violation of that ceasefire which they are to this day -- still in violation on multiple points and not just this issue.

But I think -- look, if the Russians had pushed back the Georgian troops that invaded South Ossetia and reestablished the borders of the area and stopped, we wouldn't be having this conversation. And we could instead have a very elegant nuanced discussion about who was right and who was wrong and even what the international legalities are because, frankly, I find them rather complicated.

But they did not stop there. The Russians conducted a systematic, strategic bombing campaign aimed at destroying the Georgian military. There has been no more flagrant violation of international law that I can think of since the invasion of Kuwait. And that's why, with respect to Mr. Delahunt, elements of this discussion are black and white. And the international legal situation here is very black and white. And I think that unless we recognize that, we're nowhere in this conversation.

Mr. Chairman, just briefly addressing your point, if I thought --

REP. POE (?): Mr. Chairman, just on that point. If it was supposed that -- and we're saying we, you know, we don't -- still don't know who was first -- but if indeed you did have an incursion into an area as it alleged Georgia did, what international law says that you -- I mean, that you don't -- that you stop an offensive -- I mean, what -- what's the signal that you stop? I mean --

MR. MCFAUL: I understand, Congressman.

REP. POE (?): Yeah.

MR. MCFAUL: The problem is that this is not -- South Ossetia is not -- was not at the time an independent state; it was at the time a part of Georgia. And the only reason there were Russians present there were because of bilateral and quadrilateral agreements that they had with the Georgians.

So, in principle, Russia has no right to go beyond those boundaries under any circumstances in international law because there's no justification in those agreements whatsoever. It's not even clear to me that those agreements provide justification for the reinforcement, although, again, if they had stopped at that -- but the point is we have to stop treating these areas as though they're independent. Legally and according to the Russians, they were part of Georgia so there was a movement of Georgian forces around Georgia and we're having discussions -- but that's the answer. But moving beyond that, where we can have a nuanced discussion -- when they moved into Poti and Sonaki (sp) and Gori -- that was a straight forward violation of international law.

REP. MANZULLO: Would you say that was comparable to our bombing of Belgrade when we were there to protect the Kosovars expanding that war into Serbia?

REP. BERMAN: Let's --

MR. MCFAUL: And if it was -- would -- and if I said --

REP. MANUZULLO: I supported that, by the way.

MR. MCFAUL: And I did, too, but would we then say that we therefore have to support every illegal action that happens?

REP. MANZULLO: I'd say that we'd have to have one standard instead of a double standard.

MR. MCFAUL: Well, I -- Congressman --

REP. MANZULLO: And that's what --

MR. MCFAUL: I think the standard should be the standard of international law that we're supporting. And if we want to say that Kosovo was a mistake, which I frankly don't think it was, then we can say that it was a mistake. But if we're going to use that as verification to, you know, let's --

REP. BERMAN: All right. Let's bring it back to my question. (Laughter.)

MR. MCFAUL: Well, I want to address your 30,000 feet question, if I may, about the relationship in general, which I think is important and we haven't spent enough time on. And I think you have to go back to the beginning of the Bush administration when they made a bet on Putin. They said -- the president himself said it in their first meeting -- he's a man I trust -- you all know his comment. I'd seen the president, by the way, just a few weeks

before then. I then commented in The New York Times on page one -- he made a rookie mistake and was never invited back to see him again, by the way, after that comment.

But it was a gamble and the idea was -- I know it seems like ancient history, but it was a gamble because it was before September 11th -- it was a gamble. It was the idea -- look, we want to build missile defense. That's all they wanted to do at the time. And what we need to do is get -- they can't stop us -- we want to get his acquiescence to it. And if I reach out to them and have a personal relationship with them, we'll get it. And they did. And I remember running into Condoleezza Rice several weeks afterwards and saying, "Well, maybe I was wrong; you got the deal. I was surprised."

Then September 11th happened. And we missed a big opportunity, in my opinion, to restructure this relationship on the basis of mutual security interest.

And when we go back and look at that history -- and you should -- and I think it's wise no matter who wins before the next administration takes over to look at that because we had a bunch of opportunities to build on, but in retrospect we didn't build upon.

We got distracted other places. We didn't think we needed the Russians. We thought -- with all do -- I mean, to say it very bluntly, we thought we could do a lot of things unilaterally and missile defense is a great example. This is a no-brainer. They have technologies. We could have cooperated on it. We could have done it together. We could have warned our allies about it, by the way, before we announced it. That's diplomacy. And we could go though -- I can blame you all, too -- Jackson-Vanik, remember that? Hey, it sounds like ancient history now, but when you talk to Russians, they look and they say, "If you can't even retire something that is a Cold War relic, then we're not -- we don't think you're credible on any of this other stuff."

Now, whether that's right or wrong, their perspective -- but I'm reporting to you, that is -- that's a pretty low bar to jump over, going back all the way to the beginning of, you know, eight years ago. So you look at it and there's no there there. When I looked at that --

REP. BERMAN: Seventeen years ago.

MR. MCFAUL: Or even 17 years ago -- fair enough.

When I look at the Sochi agreement that President Bush went and signed with President Putin -- I look at it and it's exactly the talking point from the beginning of the administration. And so moving forward, if you don't have any there there then there's no stake, there's no -- and there's not much -- the agreement -- there's not much talking about interest. We can disagree but at least we should have some dialogue. If you -- yourself said you should at least be sending our diplomats -- our senior diplomats to Moscow and agree to disagree rather than not talking past each other.

And here -- not to keep invoking my friend George Shultz, but when George Shultz talks about diplomacy it compares it to gardening. He says, "It's boring; it's not very interesting but you've got to do it every day because if you don't do it every day someday you'll walk out

and you see your garden and it's going to be filled with weeds." And I think that is a metaphor for U.S.-Russian relations over this last several years -- whether you start eight or 15 to make it nonpartisan. But we have not been nurturing this relationship because we thought this one was over. We thought this is over; the Cold War's over; Russia doesn't matter.

Senator -- Congressman, your point -- Senator someday -- your point about, you know, that we just checked out, we did not think about Russian interest, and we -- you know, frankly, we were distracted with other theaters that we thought were more important of our own choosing. And now, we have come back to realize that there are other strategic interests that we have.

REP. BERMAN: Being in the theater we were always interested in because they have impacts.

MR. MCFAUL: And the one footnote because I keep skipping your question about Iran -- I would say we want to work with Russia but I -- of course we do -- and we want those U.N. Security Council Resolutions. But I have to say I work on Iran in another project to think that that's our -- the only thing we can -- and I know you don't think this --

REP. BERMAN: No --

MR. MCFAUL: If we could just get our European allies to go along with some sanctions, we could bring a lot more pressure to bear --

REP. BERMAN: No, no, no, no, no.

MR. MCFAUL: I know you --

REP. BERMAN: I want to just clarify my point -- I'm thinking in the confines of what this administration is willing to consider where it seems to be wedded to a specific program of modestly and sanctions which -- dribbling along while every day Iran enriches. But --

MR. MCFAUL: Which is -- but that's another hearing, yeah.

REP. DELAHUNT: Will the gentleman yield for a minute? I interpret that as a yes and I thank the chair.

REP. BERMAN: All discipline, including mine, is fritted away.

REP. DELAHUNT: You know, I hear -- we talk about the psychology of the post-Cold War in terms of Russia -- the humiliation, we use these kind of terms, and I find it interesting that foreign policy expertise says this psychoanalytical expertise to it as well -- and I want to compliment both of you on your expertise in terms of divining the Russian psyche or at least the post-Cold War, post-traumatic syndrome I guess is the way to put it.

But I think my own interaction with the state, with the foreign ministers is that words make a difference. And if those words are bellicose in tone, if we continued to call those with whom we disagree thugs and other such language, it makes it that much more difficult to sit down and have those conversations when there are real issues of substance that must be discussed, when we don't have an option other than to have a conversation.

And this is what I see emerging in terms of the bilateral relationship between Russia and the United States. And that's why I went on earlier about having a more balanced -- we talk about Putin, and we talk about him in very derogatory terms. And I'm sure when the Duma sits or when he's there and he's now becoming very personal, it comes almost, if you will, adolescents in a sandbox. And boy, that's dangerous when you're dealing with issues of war and peace and the international order. And I welcome a comment from either one of you.

REP. BERMAN: Well, I'm -- it was a yield.

The gentlelady from Texas, which is going to be I think our final gasp on this other than parting words.

REP. JACKSON LEE: Well, Mr. Chairman, we --

REP. BERMAN: Well, Ms. Jackson Lee's questions are about Mr. Delahunt's comment about trash talk.

REP. JACKSON LEE: (Laughs.) We'll pick your choices of which will be the last. But let me just say the spirited nature of this hearing has rocked the halls of Congress. Let me apologize to the witnesses; I was chairing another committee on the difficulty of our watch list and therefore was delayed. But I do want to just inquire of the chairman because I started out with my opening remarks.

Mr. Chairman, I wanted to inquire of you, there's been a public representation of \$1 billion to Georgia. Is that something that we have conceded to? Will that come before our committee? And I appreciate the oversight of this hearing. What will be the next step as relates to the proposal or recommendation of a \$1 billion humanitarian relief?

REP. BERMAN: A very interesting question.

REP. JACKSON LEE: And I yield to the distinguished chairman.

REP. BERMAN: Thank you. I appreciate the gentlelady yielding.

The administration has announced that they intend to seek permission for a programming commission which -- in other words, not a supplemental appropriation, but a reprogramming of about -- they hope will be \$1 billion but for this fiscal year will be 500-and-something million dollars -- a little more than half -- for different kinds of economic assistance, some of it infrastructure repair, some of it humanitarian assistance, refugee assistance and other things like that coming from various different accounts -- which, by the

way, is a very interesting question because to the extent they take it from Freedom Support accounts devoted to democracy building in, believe it or not, Russia.

Are we -- I could see President Medvedev or more likely Prime Minister Putin saying, "Hit me again with that one; take away those NGO's money." I -- you know, you're really punishing me with that move. But in any event, I digress. (Chuckles.

)

So we are thinking, however, of putting forth -- and I need to talk to the leadership -- we're thinking about putting forth an authorization note to provide, to authorize some of these programs as well as some of the democracy in Georgia programs that have been referenced up to now but no final decision has been made.

REP. JACKSON LEE: Reclaiming my time, I thank the chairman for that very artful and important explanation.

I want to go back to my original comments -- and I'm going to yield to both of our esteemed scholars -- I struck the chord of balance. I hear the chairman striking the chord of balance. Hearing \$1 billion, I just came out of a hearing, since I've been in many today that dealt with the loss of 13,000 jobs in Ohio because of a monopolistic situation between delivery company -- package delivery company -- \$1 billion to Georgia strikes me as potentially insulting and I'm obviously -- I'm not going to be overwhelmed by being guided by someone else's hurt feelings, its happens to be Russia. But I do believe it is important to the American people that we have a balance in our foreign policy. There are some skepticisms and some curious actions that Georgia can be cited for as to why they thought it necessary to move as they did.

The other question becomes, what is NATO's involvement? So it doesn't look as if the United States -- either with humanitarian aid or giving them construction aid -- is again, making a statement of it's us against you.

My question to you -- the issue of balance and how we fare when we can at least show balance so that even if Russia becomes smug they can't say, "You know what? United States doesn't have a fair assessment of our concerns."

Secondly, where is NATO on this? And when I say NATO, let me say the European Union as well, under its new president. Why can't they be in front with the aid -- which, again, is a balance because we support the EU; we support NATO -- so that we can strike the balance that we want between Georgia and Russia because I think it would be the same thing if the United States decided that -- say we were the smaller country and we decided to show ourselves off and decided to shoot at one of the Caribbean countries who might, let's say in my metaphor, be the bigger country. Anybody shooting at anyone gets themselves in a lot of trouble. So how can we strike that balance? And I think \$1 billion is going overboard and your assessment on that -- and that goes to both Dr. McFaul and Dr. Kagan.

MR. KAGAN: I'm -- I'd say I'm a firm believer in the question of balance, particularly in the issue of analysis before coming to conclusions. And that's why I've spent my time miserably engrossed in Russian press statements, Russian media, South Ossetian press statements, Ossetian press statements as well as Georgian press statements. And frankly I spend more time reading what the Russians have to say about this and what the South Ossetians do than looking at the formal press statements from Georgia.

And I'm very cognizant of the fact that the Russians are engaged in a very massive information operation that has as its aim deceiving us about what actually happened. And I could take you, if you wanted, through a number of very specific cases where the Russians have put out things that were factually incorrect, repeated them multiple times and then dropped them when it became clear that they were being revealed.

And this goes also to the question of the point that Mr. Delahunt raised about the trash talk. We're not engaged in trash talk.

If you want trash talk, read what the Russians say.

REP. JACKSON LEE: But if we know that, Dr. Kagan, we know the game they're playing, heighten the Cold War in the 21st century, how do we get balance? We don't have to listen to their trash talk -- trash talk doesn't bother me.

MR. KAGAN: It doesn't bother me either, but I think that you have to recognize that there is an element -- there has to be an element of response to what they perceive as an expression of their strength. And that's the part of the balance that has to be there.

I think, frankly, \$1 billion -- I don't know how to evaluate whether \$1 billion is the right amount of money for this -- Georgia has been --has suffered very, very badly from this. We're not the only state contributing, although that would be by far the largest contribution, obviously; I don't think the Kuwaitis immediately wrote them a check or something. But -- and you're right, it would be nice if everyone else would step up.

Frankly, in my opinion, I think the administration is overcompensating with that -- the size of that money for the fact that it's unwilling to provide military assistance direct to Georgia.

REP. JACKSON LEE: You're probably right.

MR. KAGAN: I would prefer to see, in principle, a smaller amount of humanitarian aid and providing Georgia with the military capabilities it would need to defend itself.

And I agree with you, we don't need to engage in trash talk. But we do have to deal with this Russian information campaign that seems to be confusing a lot of people about what actually happened. And, granted, we should do that in a non-confrontational way. But -- and if you'd like, I'll retract calling Putin a bully or a thug or whatever I called him. But, you know, we need to face the facts and the Russian have been trying to present a certain set of facts, and they're not correct.

REP. JACKSON LEE: Dr. McFaul, I want to clarify -- I think Dr. Kagan is right. I think we can express ourselves with such that we can refute trash talk and we can probably can do a one-upsmanship. I don't particularly find Russia to be the clean-hand proponent here. But I got a little choked up when Dr. Kagan said military presence -- but how can we strike the balance so that Russia is not overbearing, if that's something you can respond to, but yet show our friendship to Georgia. And what about E.U. and NATO collaboration and putting them out front?

MR. MCFAUL: Well, it's an excellent question, and maybe a good one to end on it sounds like -- I would add -- to your adjective, balance -- I would add smart, multipronged, strategic, dual-track and many other adjectives so that we get beyond either we just do nothing and get back to where we were before or isolation. And that was the thrust of what my written statement is about exactly, we have to do these things in a smart, big, multipronged way.

And the second reason I want to emphasize is this is not just about Abkhazia and South Ossetia. If you come away from this hearing thinking that this is just some little crisis and when it gets out of The New York Times or Wall Street Journal, it doesn't matter. This is a much bigger strategic challenge that we're facing in the heart of Europe. And we don't want to -- I think it's been an incredible achievement -- and you are all part of it -- that we have a Europe whole and free and that we helped to manage the collapse of the last great empire on the planet in a rather peaceful way. That is now what the stakes are.

So how -- whether \$1 billion or -- I can't -- that's why you get paid the big bucks you do to make those --

REP. JACKSON LEE: They're big bucks we get paid. You're right.

MR. MCFAUL: -- those decisions about the tradeoffs and I take those as very serious questions.

But I want you to know that we're talking about some really big stakes here and I wouldn't want the historians when they go back to say, it was in Abkhazia or South Ossetia that Europe whole and free began to unravel. We don't want to be the ones that were not seeing the bigger picture.

And finally, Congressman, if I could just echo, I think what you said about personalization is a very, very important point for diplomacy. And it's not just about the trash talk; it can be about the love talk, too.

You know, Mr. Putin, we do not have to have friends; we do not have to have buddies; we do not have to look into people's souls; we have interests that we advance by engaging with other governments. And I think -- thinking of our relationship with Russia, perhaps even our relationship with Georgia and we could go back to in our relationships with other leaders in other places including earlier in Russia. You know, that's a means to an ends, it's not the end of American foreign policy.

Of course, we would rather have good relations but the over- personalization, I think, has gotten us into a whole heap of trouble with these countries that we've been talking about now. And I would strongly resist ever personalizing relationships again.

And the last thing I would say, President Medvedev is now in charge of foreign policy. I know analytically that's not true -- as an academic, I'm going to tell you that's not true -- but we have a national security interest, I believe, in affirming what the Russian constitution says and to deal with him as a professional, not as a buddy, not as an enemy but as our interlocutor moving forward.

REP. JACKSON LEE: And give him the credibility of the Russian constitution in dealing with him in these negotiations --

MR. MCHAUL: Exactly.

REP. JACKSON LEE: -- which would include how NATO should deal with him, how the EU should deal with him -- I think we can get out of this heap that we're in.

And I think you made a very important point, Mr. Chairman, I just want to reemphasize on the record -- all the work that has been done by the dissolution of the Soviet Union and this new look -- no matter how much pride Russia seems to have, can dissipate, be destroyed, be lost, if we continue to have tender skin.

And I would like to see us move to this balance, and I hope, Mr. Chairman, we can pursue this legislatively.

REP. BERMAN: Right.

REP. JACKSON LEE: And I thank the chairman for yielding to me and I thank the answers to my questions.

I yield back.

REP. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, just a point of personal privilege. If you could get the administration's information in regard to where the money's coming --

REP. BERMAN: Yeah,

REP. PAYNE: -- because, you know --

REP. BERMAN: Absolutely.

REP. PAYNE: -- that's going to be very critical because I could just see it coming from some hunger program in the middle of Central Africa somewhere --

REP. BERMAN: You won't believe it but part of it's coming from Iraq.

REP. JACKSON LEE: It's unnecessary.

REP. BERMAN: But --

REP. DELAHUNT: Maybe we can borrow money from that Iraqi surplus of \$70 billion, Mr. Chairman.

REP. BERMAN: Okay.

One last -- we talked about Medvedev's five principles. I have thought he said one, a sphere of influence among Russia's neighbors and protection of Russian citizens anywhere. It sounded -- I may be wrong about that but, it sounded like one of you conflated that to be protection of Russian citizens in Russia's neighbors.

MR. KAGAN: Well, Congressman, I can read you at any event my translation of his interview, which is, fourth an unquestionable priority for us is the defense of the lives and dignity of our citizens wherever they are located.

REP. BERMAN: Including West Hollywood.

MR. KAGAN: Including -- it's not specified.

REP. BERMAN: Okay.

MR. KAGAN: But, I mean, it's a very -- wherever they --

REP. BERMAN: Okay, and that's my point. It wasn't limited geographically.

MR. KAGAN: It's not limited, that's correct, sir.

REP. BERMAN: With that, this is the last five-and-a-half -- five hour hearing of this year. (Strikes gavel.) (Laughter.)

REP. JACKSON LEE: No! (Laughter.)

REP. BERMAN: You want more.

REP. JACKSON LEE: Next week. (Laughter.)

END.

