CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE

U.S.-RUSSIA RELATIONS: THE LONGER VIEW

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JILL DOUGHERTY: Okay, well, I guess we can begin. It is a very good crowd today – glad to see that. I am Jill Dougherty. I work with CNN and extremely glad to welcome everybody back. Some of you were probably here last year for the meeting of the ambassadors to Moscow and to Washington. And they are back for a second time, a second meeting. And it couldn't be a better time, of course, to meet. A lot of issues, and as everybody knows, the relationship between the United States and Russia is facing some very serious challenges. So I am looking forward to hearing what the ambassadors say.

I think you also have the statement that the ambassadors wrote – their joint feelings about what is happening and what should be done. That is in your seat. And you can take a look at that. And, of course, we will have quite a bit of time for questions to the ambassadors.

So I wanted to start now with introductions of our ambassadors. And I think we will start, perhaps, from your left, my right. And that is Ambassador Jack Matlock. He was ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1987 to 1991. He is currently adjunct professor at Columbia University. And during his 35 years in the American Foreign Service, he served as special assistant to the president for national security affairs and also as senior director for European and Soviet affairs at the National Security Council staff. That was 1983 to 1986. Also, he was the ambassador to Czechoslovakia from 1981 to 1983.

Ambassador James Franklin Collins – he was the U.S. ambassador to the Russian Federation from 1997 to 2001. He is currently director of the Russia and Eurasia programs here at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. And he is also a career diplomat, has held positions at the American embassy in Amman, Jordan, and also at the consulate general in Izmir, Turkey.

Then, to my left, Ambassador Alexander Bessmertnykh. He was the USSR's ambassador to the United States from 1990 to 1991 – very important years. He is currently the president of the International Foreign Policy Association in Moscow, career diplomat, appointed foreign minister in 1991, where he dealt with a number of pressing issues, including creating the concept of what would later become known as the CIS.

Then, we have Yuri Vladimirovich Dubinin, ambassador to the United States, 1986 to 1990, after which he was appointed Soviet ambassador to France. He is currently a professor at Moscow State Institute of International Relations. And he has served as ambassador to France, Spain, Ukraine and the United States, and representative to the United Nations and to the Security Council.

And then, finally, at the end is Arthur Hartman – Ambassador Arthur Hartman. He was the U.S. ambassador to Moscow from 1981 to 1986. He is currently senior counselor at APCO Worldwide. And he is a former U.S. ambassador to both the Soviet Union and to France.

So we have a very broad range of experience chronologically and in every other way. And also, I mentioned the statements that you will see that you have in your seats. And that represents the shared views of our ambassadors. And beyond that, as we get into this discussion, you are going to hear some other comments and certainly things in more detail from the ambassadors. Those are their own views. They go beyond the general statement. And that should be very valuable, as well, to hear what they want to say.

So could we begin then with Ambassador Collins with your opening comments?

JAMES F. COLLINS: Well, let me first – because I wear two hats here. I also represent the Carnegie Endowment, and I wanted to welcome everyone and thank you all for coming. I think what I would like to do without reading to you what you can read for yourselves is, perhaps, highlight one or two of the elements in the statement in front of you that I think was, perhaps, most important in our thinking as we discussed things over the past two days.

First of all, I think it is fair to say that we believe that the United States and Russia are today at something of a fork in the road, where a time of decision is in front of us. We noted in a lot of our discussion that there had been some promise during the run up to the summer, as a result of the meeting between President Bush and President Putin in Sochi, but that the Caucasus events have really sent our relations into a downward spiral and that we have already had substantial costs from that fact over the past several weeks.

Second thing I think we discussed at some length is the importance now of finding restraint from all sides doing what is possible to ensure that, if you will, we observe a Hippocratic approach of doing no harm as we go forward, and that it is important that we see what can be done to lay the ground for a considered decision about what direction our relations will take in the future.

We also spent a bit of time just analyzing what is behind this crisis. And I don't mean to discuss here the immediate issue of the border in Georgia and the territories. This is something larger, and I believe we concluded that in many ways, from our point of view, this immediate outbreak of hostilities and crisis in our relation reflects a number of trends and reflects the fact that many of those trends have come to a head surrounding these events.

And we noted, as you will see in the statement, that we believe it involves the emergence of new players on the international scene, the fact that Russia has really achieved recovery in its politics and economic system, that we have had a substantial evolution over the past 15 years of the Euro-Atlantic institutions, and that we have also lived with a variety of unresolved and frankly seeming intractable regional frozen conflicts that have affected the relations in the region and between us.

We also talked at some length about what the American-Russian agenda really is at this time, in our view. Where are the priorities? And looking forward to, I think in all of our minds, a new administration in Washington, and the fact that we have new leadership in Moscow, what should people be thinking about doing to ensure that our relations go in the right direction? And I will not read you the bullet points. They are here. But I would say that I found it particularly important that for those of us with experience, we were interested to express the idea that it is not just small problem solving that has to be the agenda. I don't mean solving of small problems, but limited problem solving. Rather, we need a dialogue that is going to discuss things like the rules of the road in our relations, how we are going to conduct our business. We need to understand better, I think, where we agree and where we differ about our views of what is going on in the international system and global developments and so forth. Those kinds of discussions, frankly, have not been held for years. And it is time.

And then, finally, there is a list of other issues that I think would surprise no one. We believe that we need to address the nuclear and strategic arms issues. We need to look at revitalizing institutions across the Euro-Atlantic region. And we need to think about the whole host of challenges that you will see reiterated in almost every op-ed article you read about today.

And so I think those were the key sort of three elements that I wanted to talk about. And I thought I would leave it to my colleague to discuss some of the thoughts we had about where we go next or what we should do about this.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Ambassador Bessmertnykh?

ALEXANDER A. BESSMERTNYKH: Thank you very much. I do appreciate this opportunity to be with you because you, the people who are interested in foreign policy. At the same time, you belong to different sectors of American society. I think it was a great idea of Carnegie Endowment to arrange the meeting of the ambassadors. And it is really an excellent time for having this meeting. I mean, that in times of crisis and misunderstandings, the meetings of this kind – the meetings of the other kinds, absolutely necessary.

And we have noticed – and I am sure you know that when we found ourselves actually in a critical situation – in the situation of mistrust that suddenly appeared just about a year after the declaration of the two presidents about the strategic framework of our relationships. And suddenly, we found ourselves had been mistrusting each other and not believing in our intentions, putting in doubt our aims and actions.

So there was a gap in contacts between the two countries. Of course, there were usual, formal contacts, but even the formal contacts were not fully and extensively used during this crisis. So we, having met here in Washington, we found that this is one of the problems – the two societies and the two nations and the two governments face. They should have a sustained machinery of keeping each other informed about their intentions and policies.

We found that in our previous experiences, there were pretty well-organized mechanisms of contacts. They were multi-layered. I mean, they were on the layer of the presidents, the prime ministers, the foreign ministers, deputy foreign ministers, their experts, et cetera. And that mechanism was always in action. There was never a time – a minute when they would not be idle. They were working permanently. And by doing that, they have created a certain protection net for the relationships. When something would happen, we would already know the intentions. We would know how to interpret the policies of each other.

So we decided to – by our meeting, by our statements to bring this point to the attention of the governments and of our presidents just to work again on establishing a permanently functioning mechanism of contacts. And we do also believe that besides to formal, diplomatic negotiations and consultations, we think that the public dialogue should be extended. It is – this is what we are doing now. This is what is absolutely necessary in Washington, in Moscow, in both countries, in Europe and everywhere because the societies are the new active players on the international scene. And they should be activized. They should work. And they can help to formalize, to suggest new ideas, new agendas, new points for the agendas of the two nations.

One of the major problems we have also discussed, I think, is – which requires some more thinking, and that is what kind of the world we are finding ourselves now. It is a new world. All of us hear that statement. It is a new world. It is a new time, new policies. Why that is happening? What kind of difficulty we are in? We all sense it in the financial areas, economic and political and security. Something is happening. The world is different. So we have to prepare ourselves to

handle the affairs of this new world. And this is the task we believe that should be maintained as one of the priorities in the relationship between the two of our nations.

And there is one unavoidable conclusion that the practitioners of diplomacy – I mean, the practitioners of American and Russian diplomacy – that the two countries need each other. And the two of them have special responsibilities in the previous world, in the current world, in the new world we just got in. So the sense of the special responsibility should be the underlying factor into developing our relationship in the future.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

And now we would like to have comments, maybe four or five minutes from our other ambassadors. And could we begin with you, Ambassador Matlock?

JACK F. MATLOCK: I will try to keep it very short. I think that what has happened – and it is not just in the past eight years, but ever since the end of the Cold War, and I would say since about 1993, our governments have, I think, failed to concentrate on the most important issue for both of our countries. And that is the whole nuclear-weapons issue. It is not that we have had no negotiations. Obviously, we have. And we have had programs like the Nunn-Lugar program and so on.

But in effect, the movement that was started by Reagan and Gorbachev and contended by Bush the elder and Gorbachev to reduce nuclear weapons radically and to continue that reduction with an aim of zero began to stall. And it stalled first in the '90s. And although – we have then let that strategic relationship slip from our grasp, concentrating on other things, and it seems to me that the most important thing now if we are worried about proliferation, as we should be, then we have to recognize that we are not going to be able to deal with proliferation unless Russia and the United States cooperate.

Our two countries have 95 percent approximately of the nuclear weapons in the world. And unless we can continue to reduce these and bring them under responsible control, then I think we are going to be unable to deal with the proliferation challenges that faces us both. And it seems to me we need to get our attention back to that issue and avoid the sort of actions that get in the way of – or take our attention away from our common interests.

I do think that the current hard feelings and even confrontations between us – the responsibility does not lie on one side. As a matter of fact, I think that the responsibility can be shared for taking our eye off the most important issues and dealing with them. To me, it is just incomprehensible how today, about 16 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, our two countries still have thousands of nuclear weapons on station aimed at what, for what purpose. It seems almost insane. And clearly, each has these not because of some third country – because the size of this arsenal is so much larger. They only have a reference as if we fear each other. And yet, we know we are not going to use them against each other.

So my first – let's try to get back to basics and those things that are most important. Second, I would say that when I say responsibility is shared by all the parties, we can talk about a lot of the aspects, but even looking at the most recent conflict in Georgia. You know, both the Russian press and the American media, I think gave an extremely distorted view, and one which ignored important

aspects, and the sort that raised emotions in both countries to a degree. Now, I don't want to blame the media totally, but, you know, it took several days before it leaked out to the American – most American readers that it was not Russia that attacked Georgia, but Georgia initially attacked Russian peacekeepers and people in Ossetia.

And how many of our journalists reminded people that that conflict in South Ossetia began when the Soviet Union was still in existence and was started by Georgia? And so, you know, to get out of the stereotypes that we have gotten, I don't defend Russian actions either. But I am saying that all the parties in this have made serious mistakes, and to let the emotions of a one-sided interpretation overcome our understanding of where our common interests are, I think, is not wise. And I think that as we prepare for a new administration, we need to step back, let things cool and make sure we do no further harm to the relationship. And that is advice to both countries.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Thank you, Ambassador Matlock.

Yuri Vladimirovich – Ambassador Dubinin, could you give us maybe four or five minutes of your views?

(NOTE: Mr. Dubinin speaks via translator.)

YURI V. DUBININ: I think I am grateful to my fate that I happen to be an ambassador here in Washington when both our nations managed to accomplish something which was simply not conceived to be doable by anyone in the world, namely our nations managed to stop the Cold War. And at the same time, we have managed to start a new chapter or even maybe a new era in the relationship of our two nations. Since then, our relationship been on the upwards track. And the significance of these events is tremendous.

Just let's recall September 11th, 2001.

Even during those horrible moments where the Twin Towers were still standing but ablaze, our president contacted the U.S. president, first of all, to express our solidarity with the people of the United States and with the immediate offer to offer assistance and help and alliance to combat international terrorism.

And we do remain allies in this fundamental or central focal point of international affairs. Or let's consider another issue – United States is involved in a very complex struggle in Afghanistan. And we all know that the link between the United States and its men and women in the uniforms who are fighting for the most precious human rights and freedoms is operated through Russian territory.

And in light of the above, the fact that we are now experiencing a decline in our relationship, to me, seems to be an anomaly and seems to be totally counterproductive for our bilateral relations, for the interests of the both nations and for the interests of the whole world. Just if you let me use human terms, I will say just nonsense. But we are very pleased with the words announced a few days ago by the U.S. Secretary of State – Ms. Condoleezza Rice. When she indicated that U.S.-Russia relationships cannot be held hostage to events in Georgia.

More than that, she outlined a number of areas of cooperation where the existence of those contacts and cooperation is still considered by the United States as a priority effort. In addition, and here I am not quoting, but I believe that I am very close to the exact words; Ms. Rice indicated that she will do everything possible to make sure that the next president of the United States will visit Russia.

I don't know whether you are aware of that or whether the U.S. public is aware of that, but those words by U.S. secretary of state were – found immediate response and reaction in Russia. Moscow confirmed and agreed all of the areas of cooperation indicated or outlined by the secretary of state in her speech. I will also mention that the upcoming, hopefully, trip of your next president. And the reason it wasn't very specific, I think it was simply the matter of courtesy because we really need to find out the name. (Laughter.)

More than that, Moscow indicated that we do not want any rhetoric in our relationship and that we will pursue a Russian-American relationship in a positive manner. And if our leaders follow this path, then engaging all of the diplomatic and non-diplomatic tools in our disposal, we can readily and very easily get rid of all the rubbish accumulated over the past few. And this is pretty much the content of our joint declaration, which was mentioned by Ambassador James Collins in his opening remarks.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Okay, thank you very much, Mr. Ambassador.

And finally, last but not least, Ambassador Hartman.

ARTHUR A. HARTMAN: Yes, I am not going to keep you away from your questions for very long. You all know that ambassadors would much rather deal with generalities and high policy than your detailed kinds of questions. I would just point out one thing in our statement and that is that this is a time for reflection and restraint on all sides. We are in the middle of an election campaign. The only hope I have as both a diplomat and an American citizen is that U.S. relations stay on the generalized plane that I can see Russia from my home and not get into the kind of details that will not be clarified by a kind of campaign debate on the issues.

As Jack said, and I agree entirely with him, we have got to get our eye back on the ball. What is a priority for both countries and for the world in terms of the kinds of things that our two countries can affect efficiently? And the nuclear issue, it seems to me, is high on that agenda. I don't think any of us have the answer to how those things should be handled. There is some very interesting work going on now, as people like my old boss, Henry Kissinger, and my other old boss, George Shultz, and a number of other – George Perry – William Perry – have come out for zero nuclear weapons in the world.

Another friend of mine is about to come out with an article which will I think appear in Foreign Affairs – the next issue of Foreign Affairs. How would one go about this? Because when you think about the problems that this raises about the number of countries who go for nuclear weapons not because they hope to use them, but because they feel threats that they are unable to deal with in any other way. That whole question requires a tremendous amount of thought. The United States and Russia can't have all of the answers. We have got to involve more areas of the world. And as a former ambassador to France, as my colleague next to me was also, I must say

Europe has got to play a bigger role in all of these discussions, as it seems to be doing now in connection with the Georgian problem.

But I think we can no longer rely on this effect of our bilateral relationship on the major problems of the world. They are much broader. But what we can bring if we try hard is a little more creative thinking on how you solve these problems. Thank you.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Thank you very much.

I wanted to open it up to questions. But I would like, if you will bear with me, to ask one question to start it off. I was going to ask a broad question, but I think as Ambassador Hartman said, I will ask a little bit more specific question. If you look at the results of what happened in Georgia, forgetting about the exact situation in Georgia, there are flash points around Russia now. Many of them are in the Near Abroad, the former Soviet Republics and parts of the Soviet Union.

And President Medvedev has said that Russia has what he calls privileged interests in those areas. That hasn't really been defined very specifically. But Ambassador Collins, when you were talking about rules of the road, that would seem to be one that needs a sign – (chuckles) – on the road of where Russia can exert its influence and defends its borders and its security interests close to home, but also respect the integrity and the sovereignty of those nations that are very close to Russia.

So could I start – Ambassador Bessmertnykh, perhaps, you want to give us kind of an explanation, if you could, of where Russia sees its interests and how you would define that. And then, perhaps, we will get one of the U.S. ambassadors to give, perhaps, a different perspective.

AMB. BESSMERTNYKH: I wouldn't try to exactly interpret what the president said. I will say what I think about it. First of all, it is definitely not a Monroe Doctrine. It is definitely different. It is not what the Americans usually perceive when someone says special privileged interest. In our case, it is a unique situation. The post-Soviet space – the former brotherly republics of ours with whom we have been living for centuries.

And there are historical, cultural, human, family, permanent ties still existing. They are not – they are individual. They are separate. They are on their own now. But there are special ties. There are privileged ties in all the rest of the relationships. We are closer than all the other countries abroad – I mean, in the everyday life. There are 25 million Russians living in those brotherly republics, so that is also a case to keep in mind. We are closely tied economically. And those ties have not been broken up. We intend to strengthen them. And the volume of trade and contracts and business opportunities is growing between all those nations.

But it doesn't mean that this territory of former Soviet Republics could be place to be isolated from the rest of the world. I think we are interested – and I am sure we are interested that this area has excellent relationship with outside world. And where they do it, they are better off economically and politically. The only thing that, of course, is a concern of any government that neither of those brotherly republics growing to be – to maintain policy of unfriendly policy or something. We don't have any incidents except some hints of it in some areas. So it is not a disturbing statement to the outside world. The Americans should not receive it as the attempt of Russia to isolate that area – isolate that area from the rest of the world. We are happy that they have

excellent relations with the United States and Europe and Asia, et cetera. And let them do it. So we will support that policy of them.

But this is essential to say about them, that they are closer to us than maybe the rest of the world.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Thank you. Ambassador Hartman, did you have something to say on that?

AMB. HARTMAN: Yeah. One of the advantages of being retired is you have a lot more time to read. (Laughter.) And I have been reading a lot in the sort of 19th century history about the development of nationalism, about the effect this has had on various ethnic groups that have been incorporated into national states and their efforts to achieve some kind of autonomy and fair treatment by the states that have incorporated them.

And if you think back after the First World War, some of the doctrine we brought to self-government afford the ability to vote autonomy by various ethnic groups. And then, up to the modern day, when you think about what happened in Kosovo, where because of the not only feeling, but actual oppression by a government dominated by another ethnic group because of ours, chose to exercise good Woodrow Wilson doctrine of voting its independence from that state.

And some of us recognized it. It becomes a precedent as Russia has showed us in terms of the many ethnic potential conflicts that it faces. But this is where I was saying earlier, we need some creative thinking. The nation-state has been at the origins of many of these problems because it hasn't satisfied a total population that has deep roots in its own culture and the way that it conducts itself. We are seeing it in France. We are seeing it in Spain. I don't know if Southern California is going to suddenly decide it wishes to be Spanish speaking and independent, but you know, it could happen in another 100 years.

Q: (Off mike.)

AMB. HARTMAN: (Chuckles.) How many?

In any case, this is where, it seems to me, our best minds ought to be focused. And we ought to get away from sloganeering at each other, as we try to solve real problems that exist. Thank you.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Thanks. Ambassador Collins, Monroe Doctrine or what?

AMB. COLLINS: No, I only want to make three points about this general issue. First, we have to have some historic perspective. We are 17 years into the post-Soviet period. And I was a part of governance for at least a dozen of those. And I think we all have to remember that we are dealing here with at least a dozen states, which live within borders they have never had before, including the Russian Federation.

So developing the nation-state in 15 years is a pretty healthy task. And the idea that this is going to go without incident or without challenges or without some kinds of conflict, it seems to

me, is totally unrealistic. The question for us is how do we manage those processes of dealing with the conflict?

And that brings me to the second point. What has happened in the last several weeks is not – well, is a failure of institutions, of diplomacy, of statesmanship to deal with some of the critical problems that are left over from the breakup of the Soviet Union. And I think we all have to realize this. This was a failure. Let's forget about just blame. Let's think about what went wrong really.

And the first thing that went wrong is that these conflicts were called frozen. And people were quite happy as long as the temperatures stayed cold. It was easier. It didn't have to take a priority place on the agenda for the week. We have all been diverted for many other issues. And I think what we all need to realize is that these kinds of conflicts represent a real and often a present danger to the stability of regions like Eurasia, the Balkans, India, Pakistan and so forth. In other words, unless managed and dealt with effectively through the instruments of diplomacy and statesmanship, they tend to be dealt with by quite different forces as we have witnessed in the last few weeks. And so I think that is the other point.

And then, the final point I want to make is that although my colleagues have talked about nuclear weapons and so forth, I don't want to leave the impression that our discussion said that that is all we are going to think about and everything else has to be subordinated to that. We have to be able to walk and chew gum at the same time as nations. What we have not done effectively, it seems to me, over the past several years is take a series of issues that we all understand exist, including frozen conflicts, economic issues and the nuclear problems, structure a way to think about them, and organize working on them and then get on with it.

Rather we have been distracted by everything – either everything being first priority or the priority being whatever the headline said yesterday. And we can afford, I think, neither it going forward.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Okay, so let's open it up. I am sure there are a lot of questions. Sir, in the middle there. Yes?

If you could identify yourself for us.

Q: Yes. My name is Charles Krause. I am a formal journalist.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Hey, Charles.

Q: Hi, Jill.

And I am now a colleague or Ambassador Hartman's APCO, which a number of Russian clients, including Mikhail Khodorkovsky. My question is this, should human rights rule of law and Russia's internal political development be on the agenda? Is it a legitimate part of the agenda going forward?

MS. DOUGHERTY: Do you have any particular person in mind who you want –

Q: No, I would be interested to know – hear from both the U.S. side and the Russian side on that issue.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Okay. Ambassador Matlock, you want to take that?

AMB. MATLOCK: Well, you know, I think human rights has to be part of American foreign policy. But I don't think American foreign policy is exclusively a matter of human rights. That is one point.

Second, I do think that to be effective in working on human rights, one must be reasonably practical. One of the things when we were trying to get it on the agenda – the effective agenda during Gorbachev's time is we approached it as an agenda that we would work on jointly. And when Secretary of State Shultz first presented in his first meeting with Shevardnadze a list of cases, of refuseniks and political prisoners. Shevardnadze said, well, can I talk about race relations in the United States? And Shultz said, of course, be my guest.

I think we have come a long way, but we have got problems. And if you have got any suggestions, we are going to listen. Also, President Reagan decided that we are too upfront. We talk too much publicly about this in an accusative way. If we are going to get anywhere, we have got to handle it privately. And we have got to handle it within the context of improving understanding between our governments on these bigger issues. And eventually, we got it on the agenda. And we got it voluntarily on the agenda because it was handled in a way that what we want is respect for commitments under the Helsinki Final Act, an international act, not you must do this because we tell you to do it.

I think that we have to recognize that we are not the ultimate arbiters or what is moral or what makes a good government or necessarily what makes a democratic government. Frankly, I find it a little puzzling that Americans seem to feel that Russia has a totally non-democratic government when they have a president running about 70 percent approval, and ours doesn't quite reach that level. (Laughter.) Now, that is not the only measure of democracy. I understand that.

But I think we have to stop behaving as if we are the world's nanny. And we are doing report cards on every country. And you know, and when we signed the Helsinki Final Act, Congress had the State Department do a report card on every other country. Nobody does a report card on the United States. And if we had an international party, I suspect that particularly over the last few years on quite a few issues, we would find that we have slipped from the standards that the world thinks is part of democracy.

So I really – I don't want to get into too long of a thing except that in this is many other things. One has to make sure that you do no harm. And if you do human rights in a way that you convey to the government that you are out to overthrow that government, you know, you are not going to get any cooperation. So it all depends upon how you go about it, where your standards are, and – I mean, if you are going to discuss it, make sure you have got clean hands at home.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Ambassador Bessmertnykh?

AMB. BESSMERTNYKH: I'll just say a couple of words. When Shultz presented the list to Shevardnadze, you know how Shevardnadze answered. But before that, Shultz presented the list

to Germika (ph). I was present at that meeting – that was the last Germika meeting with an American secretary of state. And Germika said this is an intervention in domestic affairs of the Soviet Union.

But times have changed. We have arranged during the presidency – Reagan's presidency that human rights item became a permanent item on the agenda of our relationship. It was during the Soviet period. Now it is definitely logical thing to discuss human-rights issues whenever there is a reason to raise those issues, though, Russia is prepared to discuss them all. But when you raise a particular question about a certain person or a certain situation, you have got to be legally well prepared to defend your position that something wrong really happened.

So it is legal, permissible subject for the bilateral relationship between the two countries.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Okay. And another question. Yes, please.

Q: My name is Nargiz Asadova. I am with the Russian Information Agency. Thank you. There is very popular idea in Russia right now that the international rules, the way of solving international problems doesn't work anymore. And while Russia blames the United States for invasion in Iraq, and the United States blames Russia for invading in Georgia and so on, so maybe it is a good time get together and to create some new rules. And does the world need these new rules? Thank you.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Anyone want to talk that? New rules? (Cross talk.) I think we have actually mentioned quite a lot about that.

AMB. COLLINS: I would say that we have addressed that question in two ways in this statement. First, I think both explicitly and implicitly we would agree that it is past due time for our two governments and probably many other governments involved to talk about what the rules of the road need to be in a very different kind of world from the one that we left 15, 20 years ago. It is no longer a bipolar world. It is very different. It is a much more interdependent world. We have all had experience in globalized economics, ethnic problems, and so forth.

And so it certainly seems to me that one of the things we concluded is that certainly for the U.S.-Russia relationship, we need to have a very sustained and comprehensive discussion about how do we see the world? What is affecting us? What are our concerns? What are our problems? What are our hopes? And secondly, how do we organize ourselves better to deal with the changed world? I mean, need I remind you, we are having one or two economic problems this week. And they are not only here. These are now global. And I would simply say that we probably have plenty of room to talk about what we do when the next one comes because there will be another economic crisis.

And I think that – I would make one final point of my own observation. There has been a lot of loose talk about isolating Russia or Russia talking about being isolated. I think most of this is just nonsense. If you look at the Russian place in the global economy today, there is absolutely no question that it is not isolated. They may – Russians, in some cases, may regret they are not more isolated when the stock market goes down. But the fact of the matter is they are part of the global, financial, commercial and economic system.

They are also a part, by virtue of any number of agreements and arrangements and institutional ties, of a broad Euro-Atlantic community. Now, there are problems in that community about where it should go and how it should conduct its business, details of what to do next, including how do we deal about the relationships between specific institutions and the people who aren't members of them, such as the EU and the countries that are not members.

Well, those issues are things that need to have sustained discussion, dialogue, negotiation to sort out number one, what are the problems, what are the real problems? And number two, how can you either resolve them or manage them? And it seems to me that is, you know, in a sense, what is needed. What I don't think is particularly helpful is to try to figure out who is responsible for all of the world's ills, which is largely what has been going on for the last several weeks.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Thanks. And Ambassador Dubinin, you wanted to say something. Could I kind of move that question a little bit forward – (in Russian) – I just wanted to ask a little – (in Russian).

President Medvedev has said that Russia will not be isolated. And you were just speaking about the fact that, perhaps, it is nonsense to think that Russia could be isolated. But if there are countries, the United States included, that try to isolate Russia, try to kick it out of the G8 or whatever, what does Russia do?

AMB. DUBININ: Let me try to take the first question first, and then I will take the second one. I think they have probably asked the most important question regarding the security of the world. And to think the question became even more significant in light of the events, which transpired on the night of August 7th. And let me explain why because it is that night of August 7th, Georgia was burning sleeping city of Tskhinvali. Georgia was killing innocent civilians, Russian citizens and Russian peacekeepers. But even poorly armed Ossetian people were still able to offer resistance.
That was when Russia called for an urgent meeting of the United Nations Security Council and asked for a ceasefire resolution.

And if the Security Council acted upon that, we would have had quite a different situation. And I believe that we know that that decision was not adopted, and we know who voted against it. The same happened with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. It didn't help much either. And in light of these events, we have to conclude that the international security – or European security architecture, which was devised and developed in the past, is no longer adequate.

Therefore, Russia is urgently putting forward the agenda item of discussing the new architecture of international security arrangements. And we are currently expecting a response from our partners, primarily European partners and the United States because I believe that the significance and urgency of this matter is quite obvious.

And I think that that item and this question will definitely be on the agenda and will be discussed in a much better climate or atmosphere, which will certainly come after those very volatile days the world survived just a few weeks ago.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Mr. Ambassador, in the interest of getting as many questions as possible, could I withdraw my question just for maybe later? But I would like to hear some more – (in Russian).

(Cross talk.)

MS. DOUGHERTY: I'd like to get one more – (in Russian).

Yes, sir? Your hand up with the pencil.

Q: Thank you. Nikolay Zimin. As I understand, discussions between the ambassadors were very interesting. Recommendations are interesting and useful. So I had kind of technical question for Mr. Collins. Are you going to present those recommendations to current administration or just discussions like discussions? Thank you.

AMB. COLLINS: Well, I guess it is sort of a short answer. These are in front of you. And they are now in the public domain. We always hope that people with some authority, some of whom are here, will take account of them. And we will probably talk to people in the administration about them.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Okay.

Yes, sir in the back.

Q: Miles Pomper from Arms Control Today. Ambassador Matlock, in particular, I was wondering if you could elaborate a little more on when talking about the nuclear-weapons issues, what would you see as the agenda for the next U.S. president, in particular, when they take office? What are the first items you would list as things that we should start getting to work on?

AMB. MATLOCK: Well, one of the things that needs urgent attention is what we do about the START treaty. And particularly, to preserve some of those provisions and the verification procedures, we are going to have to get an agreement before the end of next year, if I understand it.

Now, there is a whole range of other issues that should be addressed, particularly having to do with non-proliferation. I have been working with a group that Secretary Shultz organized with also Secretary Kissinger and William Perry and others – it is a bipartisan group – to study these various issues. And actually, our recommendations will be published shortly by Stanford University Press. There may be – or more than a dozen studies of various aspects of the nuclear issue that need to be addressed, all the way from nuclear suppliers groups as to how you scale down the weapons now that are deployed.

So there are a lot of issues out there. But one of the most urgent is to deal with an extension and at least some form of the first START agreement.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Okay. Yes, sir, in the middle.

Q: Wayne Merry, American Foreign Policy Council. At the risk of making a proposal to three of my former bosses on the podium – (laughter) – as well as to our two Russian guests, I

might suggest an additional bullet item. From you, as former ambassadors, to your respective governments to help facilitate a much broader public exposure role for the two current serving ambassadors.

I am acquainted professionally and personally with both Ambassadors Kislyak and Beyrle. I think both of them are very experienced professionals. They both speak the language of their host country very well. And yet, neither of them really has played the kind of outside of government public communication role during this last month that would, I think, have been very helpful. I understand that this – in the Russian case, partly because he hadn't yet arrived. But there was certainly a charge (sp) here. And I think in both cases, what you need are ambassadors to be able to communicate to a much broader political audience through television, through other mechanisms.

And that my impression is that both in Moscow and in Washington, this is not happening. And that you, as former ambassadors, I think, have a prestige that could help encourage opening up that kind of broader public diplomacy role for those two ambassadors, which I think, at the moment, would be very helpful.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Ambassador Hartman, how would you do that?

AMB. HARTMAN: Well, I wouldn't even try. (Laughter.) It seems to me the ambassadors are the last ones to get a public discussion going because it, in a sense, undermines the utility of them as means of communication.

I would rather look to the convincing public figures to take the kinds of positions we have been talking about and get a real public discussion and understanding going. Certainly in our country, without public understanding, you are going to get nowhere. I mean, I am heartened by the fact that for the first time in a long while we have got an adult secretary of defense. But that isn't quite enough. (Laughter.) The entire political process has to be involved in discussing these very important issues. And convincing the public that sloganeering back and forth is not going to solve them.

And so I think that is a major job, but it requires people with some public position to do that. Ambassadors, I am afraid, are not going to ever be in that kind of position. It took our friend, George Kennan, retirement to really bring him out of – into a public role in which he had tremendous influence.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Ambassador Bessmertnykh, I hear a note of disagreement there.

AMB. BESSMERTNYKH: Yes. I believe that the ambassadors have to be part of the public discussions. And they would have another chance to explain the position of their country, to participate in the dialogues, to have disputes, et cetera. But they don't need any instruction from the government to be part of those public events. We have here Ambassador Vezhba (sp) sitting in front of me. And if you would look at the newspapers of Russia while he was the ambassador, you will see that almost every week, he was there. And he participated in TV disputes, et cetera.

I think it is very important for the diplomats to be open, to be discussable. And they would help their countries and they would help the countries that receive them to understand the policy of their nations better.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Okay. There is a lady right there in yellow.

Q: Ina Konopleva (ph), Cato Institute. It was stated here today is that two countries need each other – U.S. and Russia. Unfortunately, it doesn't feel like this in everyday life. Can you tell me, please, additional major points why two countries need each other except reduction of nuclear weapons? Thank you.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Well, that is a good question to ask the public, too, or to bring up to the public. Let's see. Ambassador Matlock, what do you think?

AMB. MATLOCK: What was the question?

Q: Why do we need each other, other than not blow each other up?

(Laughter.)

AMB. MATLOCK: Yeah, why do we need each other, other than –?

I think we need each other on a whole range of issues. It is not just – I selected the nuclear as one of the most urgent ones. But Russia is a country of enormous resources, both natural and human. They are the largest country in the world geographically. I honestly – if we need a missile defense against rogue states, we need to do it jointly. They have got great geography for that, and they have also got technicians.

If we had not had our joint program in space, what would have happened to the space station when, you know, our shuttle was unable to go up there? I mean, you can go on, and on, and on, but the fact is how are we going to deal with global warming? How are we going to deal with all – many of the other transnational issues if we don't do it cooperatively with Russia – and not only with Russia, with other countries? It just seems to me that it is axiomatic that this is not just a matter of keeping ourselves from being blown up, but also a matter of creating a climate where we can all cooperate – and not only with Russia, but with others to reach a common goal.

And our most serious challenges can only be overcome by cooperation with other countries. It cannot be done unilaterally or it cannot be done just be bilaterally with a few. And so across the board, we do need more cooperation. And they need us, we need them. I think Ambassador Bessmertnykh was absolutely right.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Could I jump in here with a question – a very specific one? In fact, it came up today – the news that Russia is sending some military ships – naval ships, I should say – to Venezuela. Ambassador Collins, what should the United States do if Russia begins to exert some – well, send some signals in the western hemisphere? Let's put it that way.

AMB. COLLINS: Well, I guess the first thing I would say is don't overreact. You know, the world's navies enjoy freedom of the seas. And there are certain kinds of rules that pertain. And I think while – if the point here is to make some kind of symbolic gesture that we, too, can sail our navy around, well, fine. Then, the point gets made and we all can go home and not worry too much about it.

I guess what I am really saying is I don't think anyone seriously in the United States government will take this as a major threat to American security. And I think that is the kind of issue that one has to look at very objectively. And secondly, I think it is a fair point that, you know, if we are going to have global interests, then in a globalized system, you know, the world's oceans, the world's resources and so forth are going to be a subject for exploitation or use by pretty much all those countries who have the capacity to do so.

The question is what will the rules be. And here, I would go again. You know, we have had a longstanding set of arrangements about incidents at sea with the government in Moscow. That probably is due for updating. One of the things one certainly wouldn't want to have happen is some stupid incident because one ship was in the place where another one was at the same time. And I think it is fair to say that we probably haven't discussed this in some years. And it is probably time. If we are going to have Russian naval vessels near our shores and in areas where our vessels are regularly deployed, then we had better make sure that they know how to behave toward one another.

And so I would say that would be my immediate reaction to it. Maybe it is a time that reminds us there is something more to talk about.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Mm-hmm. Okay. Let's see. Oh, yes. Sir?

Q: Harvey Swann (ph) – (inaudible) – Education Program. It is years that America – majorly urgent in the relationship between two countries is the expansion of NATO. I don't know if I am correct or if the ambassadors have any comments on that. If it is, why are we so adamant about the expansion of NATO, Ukraine, and Georgia and places where there is a natural – (inaudible)?

MS. DOUGHERTY: And who would like to – do you have any person in mind? Any ambassador in mind who would like to – you would like to hear from?

Q: Both sides. (Off mike.)

MS. DOUGHERTY: Okay. Let's start with Ambassador Dubinin.

AMB. DUBININ: More recently, of course, as I said before, we witnessed some events that happened on the night of August the 7th. And Deputy Secretary of State of the U.S., Mr. Burns – on September the 17th, in his remarks at the Senate said that for a number of weeks prior to August the 7th, the United States had in quite resolute terms suggested that Georgia refrain from that kind of hostility.

And if that weren't enough, he said, and I remind you, he said that – in his remarks at the Senate during the day of August the 7th, and of course, the hostilities began on the night of August the 7th. So with hours to go before Georgia unleashed the hostilities, it was told by U.S. counterparts and in no-nonsense terms to not undertake what was imminent because the State Department saw this potential course of action as something that was fraught with a disaster. And those were his actual words.

And I am not judge of what actually took place and went down between Tbilisi and Washington with hours or days or weeks to go before the hostilities that started on the night of the 7th. However, if everything is, in fact, happened the way it was told by Mr. Burns then it turns out that Georgia committed an act of aggression, despite persistent warnings issued by Washington.

And by doing what it did, it involved Washington, and of course, pretty much the rest of the world in a situation that has evolved since. Let us imagine – let us try and reconstruct this scenario, but with a twist. Let's say at that point in time, Georgia would actually have been part of NATO as organically linked to NATO. At the very least – and that is the smallest that we can come up with and take away from this scenario is that had that been the case and had Georgia done what it did, then the shadow of what it did would have been cast over the entire NATO by affiliation, and the entire mechanics of NATO – NATO being, of course, a military organization.

And we should say our thanks to the God almighty, to all and everyone, to the United States in general and Washington, in particular, that when it did what it did, Georgia was not, in fact, part of NATO. And this is what constitutes one of our concerns and one of the irritants for us, as far as Georgia and, mind you, Georgia continues to insist that it be made part of NATO and on an ASAP basis, by the way.

And another explanation is what kind of terms and conditions Georgia is insisting on. During the second Sarkozy-Medvedev meeting the French president brought along for the Russian president a legally binding document, which he had hand-delivered from Tbilisi on behalf of Saakashvili. The document contained a commitment whereby the Georgian side undertook to not use military force against South Ossetia.

That document was part of the number of accords reached by the French and Georgian presidents – I'm sorry, by the French and Russian presidents. But Sarkozy's plane was barely out of Georgian space as Saakashvili already said that Georgia would not abide by that agreement. And just imagine, if Georgia were to become part of NATO, imagine the kind of nice surprise that NATO would be receiving as a member. And imagine the kind of nice quote, unquote, "surprise" that the rest of the world and Russia would be receiving with Georgia as a member of NATO.

And just one very brief –

MS. DOUGHERTY: If you could keep it brief because we are running out of time.

AMB. DUBININ: – one very brief word about Ukraine because Ukraine has been – or I can put it onto here.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Maybe we should leave it at Georgia. Should we leave it at Georgia? It is very interesting. I have two –

AMB. DUBININ: He didn't hear you. Ukraine – a mere 17 percent of the respondents in Ukraine in the opinion polls support Ukrainian membership in NATO – just 17.7, despite all the financial injections on the part of foreign sources. Does NATO need a member who is only 17 percent of the population – well, their country to be in NATO.

MS. DOUGHERTY: We have two people who want to quickly respond – Ambassador Collins and then Ambassador Hartman.

AMB. COLLINS: I think you deserve a more specific answer to your question. And I would start with the first point that expansion of NATO or the enlargement of NATO or whatever you want to call it is a fact. It has happened. It has taken place. But we are left at this particular stage, it seems to me, with a real problem. And that is that there are clearly issues that exist surrounding any additional memberships that need to be resolved with Russia and with other member states or non-member states before you are going to have a stable change in the current situation.

Now, I think, you know, we have worked – and I was part of it in the '90s, and some of our colleagues around here have been part of it since. From the very beginning of this process to discuss with Russia what is a working and workable and effective relationship between NATO and Russia – and I would add, perhaps, NATO and non-member states. I would further say that we have not got to the right conclusion yet. And that is what much of the argument is about. And so, it seems to me that while I am not going to get into whether it is the right thing or the wrong thing – I have my own views on that – one of the simple facts of life is that we have in front of us issues that need to be negotiated and discussed.

We have a history of doing that. It seems to me foolish to go forward with further steps on NATO expansion or enlargement without realistically addressing these questions. Now, I think it is also important to understand that sovereign states have every right to choose their affiliations. And I sort of reject the premise that all of this, you know, added membership of NATO has been just because we have been forcing countries into the alliance. That is not the case. The fact of the matter is countries have joined the alliance because they saw it in their interest, and they felt they got something from it.

And the allies felt that by having those people in – those new states in, they also strengthened the alliance. But I think we have come up to a point now in this process – and by the way, it is not just the NATO alliance, I think it is true of the EU and many others – where we have new issues that need to be dealt with effectively and realistically by all concerned in order not to have further enlargement or efforts or moves in that direction become not stabilizing, but destabilizing.

And to the extent that we have not yet resolved those issues or found a way to deal with them, I personally believe that we need to go slow and we need to find ways through these issues because if we don't, we will find that this is not something that stabilizes, but rather divides. And I think that is in nobody's interest across Europe.

MS. DOUGHERTY: I know we have two more American ambassadors who want to say something quickly on that. And then, what I would suggest is if we have Ambassador Hartman, Ambassador Matlock, and then, Ambassador Bessmertnykh, maybe you can make some brief comments. And then, unfortunately, we will be out of time. Ambassador Hartman?

AMB. HARTMAN: Let me just go back to something I said earlier about creativity. We, I think, had a great failure at the time that the principal threat and insecurity in Europe was

disappearing in the form of the old Soviet Union. We didn't think creatively about what sort of structure should take the place of NATO because NATO's basic purpose at that point really didn't exist anymore.

And instead of rethinking the whole idea of what would create greater stability and greater security for the problems that then would exist with the Soviet Union that was coming apart, but also finding a new form for itself with states on its border that might have felt insecure. What sort of structure would be helpful to settling all that down while people go on and integrate their economies and do all the good things that would gradually eliminate much of the instability that existed as a result of the Soviet Union going into history?

MS. DOUGHERTY: And Ambassador Matlock?

AMB. MATLOCK: Yes. I think I agree with both of my colleagues – what they said. I would say more specifically in the case of Georgia and Ukraine, neither qualify under normal rules for NATO membership. NATO has always required before states to resolve any unresolved territorial issues before they were eligible to enter. Now, Georgia has not resolved its territorial issues. And the reason for that was you don't want a state coming in and using NATO to try to resolve territorial issues. And this was clearly the motivation of Georgia.

AMB. HARTMAN: Jack, let me interrupt at that point. NATO made this mistake when it invited Turkey and Greece to come in before they had settled their problem. So, you know, we haven't been – (inaudible) – on this issue.

AMB. MATLOCK: (Chuckles.) All right, except that – but I think that in Eastern Europe, we did make sure that Hungary and Romania – that Hungary and Slovakia and others resolved the issues they had. And I think that was very important. Second with Ukraine – I mean, the majority of the population doesn't want to be in NATO and the pro and con are along regional lines. It really will split the country. And actually, the government that wanted to do that has now broken up. And the president who is the main champion – party gets less than 20 percent of the vote.

Now, you know – and yet, this is cast in some sort of east-west issue. It is an internal Ukrainian issue. And membership in NATO will exacerbate it and not solve it. Now, I think Hartman is absolutely right that by using NATO as our security organization in Europe, instead of creating a new one of which Russia would be a part, was a fundamental mistake. Now, we can't turn the clock back and nobody is suggesting that, I don't believe.

But there is a time when you have to stop. And to simply say, well, every country should have the right to apply to any alliance it wants. That is true. But an alliance and its members should also have the right to determine whether it is in their interest to take in a member. And I am saying it is not in the United States' interest and it is not in NATO's interest. Forget whether, you know, Russia is for it or against it. But there are also serious consequences of ignoring Russia's attitude. We have seen how passionate it is. And if anybody thinks we can get genuine strategic cooperation on other issues if we keep pushing this, I think they are just thinking about a world that doesn't exist out there.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Well, thank you. I would like – I know Ambassador Bessmertnykh – everybody wants to say something on this – if you could address that, and then, would you be able

to sum up over the last couple of days with your fellow ambassadors what you have been discussing and what you take away from this. What is the most important thing you take away?

AMB. BESSMERTNYKH: Thank you very much. You are absolutely right that this is one of the irritants. There are two basic irritants for Russia in the behavior of the West. First, the NATO expansion. Second, the construction of the ABM – the part of the ABM system in Eastern Europe. Both actions are perceived as a threat to Russia. Explain in two words – we don't have time.

First of all, the last days of the Soviet Union, then in the first days of the new Russia, we were discussing it with the United States. United States promised us on the highest level that there will be no expansion of the NATO. And this is because of that – because of that statement, we accepted easily the membership of the united Germany into NATO.

The second promise was that the NATO would be transformed with years going, which would be a less military, but more political institution. So both promises were broken probably by the following events. So that is why we are looking at that with an unpleasant aftertaste.

I agree with Jack. The answer to the problem is to start thinking about another structure of European security with the participation of the United States, so that it would replace the old bloc system that has been existing here.

Now, as for the signing up of the proceedings, I will say first that it was the only one in the last week's meeting of people who have concentrated totally on the necessity to find the way out of the bad situation we found ourselves here. We were not just discussing Russian-American relationship. We were trying to find out what are the possibilities just to quiet down the rhetorics, the negative emotions, how to return back to the basics. So the general trend of the discussion was positive. And I think this kind of approach should be the part of a formal discussion and all the other discussions that are going to take place.

We have tried to sift the issues to find which are the matters of priority? Which are of medium important? And which are the matters that could wait? We also thought that it would be advisable not to wake sleeping dogs in certain areas. When we do that, we find ourselves in trouble. And sometimes, little spots bring the two great nations into conflict because each of us may perceive those happenings in different ways.

We believe that public diplomacy should be more active. And we decided that we shall be trying to bring to the attention of our governments the ideas that have been discussed and have been worked out. We planned some more meetings in the near future. And we shall bring to you those meetings other personalities of importance, so that the point of view developed would be recognized, would be accepted and would be respected.

So I will probably stop there because there are more positive elements I carry from this discussion. But we don't have time to discuss them. And I thank you very much for monitoring this discussion today now.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. I want to thank everyone who participated – Ambassador Matlock, Ambassador Collins, Ambassador Bessmertnykh, Ambassador

Dubinin, and Ambassador Hartman. And also thank you, and let's hope that next year when the ambassadors are back, it will be more peaceful and that we will have some sort of direction in which the foreign policies of both countries can proceed. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

(END)