

**TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE CURRENT
SITUATION IN GEORGIA AND IMPLICATIONS
FOR U.S. POLICY**

Tuesday, September 9, 2008

U.S. SENATE
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:32 a.m. in Room SD-106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Carl Levin, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Committee Members Present: Senators Levin [presiding], Lieberman, Bill Nelson, E. Benjamin Nelson, Bayh, Clinton, Pryor, Webb, Warner, Collins, Thune, and Martinez.

Committee staff members present: Richard D. DeBobes, Staff Director, and Leah C. Brewer, Nominations and Hearings Clerk.

Majority staff members present: Madelyn R. Creedon, Counsel, Richard W. Fieldhouse, Professional Staff Member, Peter K. Levine, General Counsel, William G. P. Monahan, Counsel, and William K. Sutey, Professional Staff Member.

Minority staff members present: Michael V. Kostiw, Republican Staff Director, William M. Caniano, Professional Staff Member, and David A. Morris, Minority Counsel.

Staff assistants present: Brian F. Sebold and Breon N. Wells.

Committee members' assistants present: Christopher Caple, assistant to Senator Bill Nelson, Greta Lundeberg, assistant to Senator Bill Nelson, Andrew R. Vanlandingham, assistant to Senator Ben Nelson, Jon Davey, assistant to Senator Bayh, M. Bradford Foley, assistant to Senator Pryor, Gordon Peterson, assistant to Senator Webb, Sandra Luff, assistant to Senator Warner, Samuel Zega, assistant to Senator Warner, Jason Van Beek, assistant to Senator Thune, David Brown, assistant to Senator Martinez, and Brian W. Walsh, assistant to Senator Martinez.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CARL LEVIN, U.S. SENATOR
FROM MICHIGAN**

Chairman LEVIN. Good morning, everybody. Today the committee meets to receive testimony on the situation in Georgia. Our witnesses are Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Eric Edelman; assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, Daniel Fried; Lieutenant General John Paxton, Jr., Director of Operations, J-3, Joint Staff; and Brigadier General Michael Flynn, Director for Intelligence, J-2, Joint Staff.

We hope our witnesses will provide some of the backdrop for the current disputes over South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which date back to the early 1990s following the breakup of the Soviet Union and are rooted in ethnic differences going back hundreds of years. We also need to understand the immediate causes in the months leading up to the outbreak of hostilities in early August, what led to the Georgian government's decision to attempt to assert control militarily over South Ossetia, given its strong ties to Russia, and what led Russia to respond with a disproportionate military offensive extending beyond South Ossetia.

A related question is what did the United States and others do or fail to do in the run-up to the conflict to try to prevent it. Did Georgian President Saakashvili believe that the United States would support his use of military force and, if so, was there any basis for his belief? Did the NATO promise of future admission for Georgia and Ukraine play a role in the Georgian decision? Did the United States do all it could to encourage Georgia to work within the existing peace settlement framework under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, or OSCE, and discourage the use of force by the Georgians?

I'm encouraged by the immediate response by the United States and our international partners, which presented a united front and sent clear signals to the parties involved. This morning it is reported that Russian President Medvedev and the European Union have agreed on a schedule for the pullback of Russian forces and the deployment of a 200-person European Union observer force in the region. Under the agreement, Russian forces will begin to withdraw forces from undisputed parts of western Georgia in the next week, European Union observers will be in place no later than October 1st, and Russia has agreed to withdraw from all positions in undisputed areas by no later than October the 11th.

We need to look at the implication of all these events for our longer-term relationship with Georgia, Russia, and others in the region. We need to review all our options, including options that the State Department and Defense Department are looking at. This hearing begins Congress's review of the Georgia crisis and understanding its implication for Georgia's security, for the region, and globally.

I hope our witnesses today can help us sort through these implications, and these include: What are the implications of Russia's military assertiveness for the United States' strategic relationship with Russia? What is the right balance to strike between signaling to Russia that its claims of a sphere of influence which override the sovereignty of its neighbors are unacceptable, while keeping the door open to Russian integration into the broader international community and working with Russia in areas where our strategic interests are aligned, such as preventing a nuclear Iran or counterterrorism efforts?

How should the United States proceed in building relationships with Georgia in others in the region, including military ties? What does the crisis in Georgia mean for NATO's future, both in terms of reassuring NATO members like Poland and the Baltic States and for the applications of Georgia and Ukraine for membership action plans, the first step to be considered for full NATO member-

ship? Finally, what are the implications for the control of oil and natural gas pipelines from Central Asia for the U.S. and Europe's energy security?

We hope to gather from this hearing our witnesses' thoughts on how to step back from deeper confrontation while preserving principles of sovereignty and other important principles of international law. We're going to begin the hearing in open session, and at the conclusion of the open session we will reconvene in a closed session. The balance of my statement will be inserted in the record in full.

I don't know—Senator Warner suggested we—Senator Martinez, did you want to? [The prepared statement of Senator Levin follows:] [COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator MARTINEZ. No, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I will hear from the witnesses and have questions later.

Chairman EDLMAN. Very good.

Secretary Edelman. We welcome all of our witnesses. Thank you for being here.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ERIC S. EDELMAN, UNDER SECRETARY
OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

Mr. Edelman: Chairman Levin and members of the committee: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to appear before you today, thank you to Senator Warner, to discuss the Georgia-Russia conflict and the implications for security in the region. I'm particularly pleased to be here with my State Department colleague, Ambassador Fried, with whom I've worked on these issues for many years.

With your indulgence, I have a longer written statement for the record that I'd like to submit and I'll try and keep my opening remarks brief, but I hope fairly comprehensive.

We're here today to discuss a conflict that many of us had hoped would be avoided. Regrettably, however, despite intensive diplomatic efforts on the part of the administration to reduce tensions in the region, serious conflict did ultimately break out between Russia and Georgia, leading to a significantly disproportionate response by Russia, its military invasion of a sovereign country, and its efforts to undermine the democratically elected leadership of one of its neighbors.

All of these developments are deeply troubling, having called into question Russia's reliability as a partner, and pose serious challenges for Russia's neighbors, the United States, and our European allies. In response to the crisis, U.S. policy is to support Georgia's people, sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, support our allies in the region who feel threatened by Russian aggression, and demonstrate to Russia that its aggressive actions do not serve its national interest, will not be tolerated, and will not be cost-free.

Let me begin by making it clear that the United States does not seek a new Cold War. As Secretary Gates has said on a number of occasions, one was enough. We have never seen our activities in the region as a 19th century contest with Russia for influence, nor do we believe that the Eurasian space should be subject to any external sphere of influence.

In light of recent developments, we are now at a crossroads. Russia must decide how it wants to define its future relationship with

the international community. Russia's recent actions have already diminished its standing in the world and have led to its growing isolation. The international community has resolutely rejected Russian aggression. Russia's future actions will define how it is viewed in the world and how the world moves forward with Russia. We hope that, on sober reflection, Russia will choose a different path, but our policy will respond appropriately to Russian actions.

We'll continue to work with our western allies and our international partners to resolve the current crisis. U.S. cooperation with Europe has been the bedrock of the Euro-Atlantic security structure for decades and we will pursue opportunities coming out of the current crisis to build a stronger and more capable Euro-Atlantic alliance to meet the range of 21st century challenges.

South Ossetian and Georgian forces exchanged fire repeatedly in early August. We believe the Georgians conducted a military operation with what they may have believed were limited political aims of restoring Georgian sovereignty over South Ossetia, to eliminate the harassing fire from South Ossetian separatists on Georgian civilians. The use of artillery fire and multiple rocket launches into urban areas and into the proximity of Russian peacekeepers was lamentable and we do not condone that activity.

But Russia used Georgia's ground operation as a pretext for its own offensive. Sweeping Georgian forces out of Tskhinvali, Russia quickly carried the operation into undisputed Georgian territory. Russia's two-pronged assault resulted in the retaking of all of South Ossetia and the Georgian-controlled Upper Kodori Gorge in the Abkhazia region.

Within hours of Georgia's move into South Ossetia, thousands of hardened Russian combat troops and hundreds of tanks, vehicles, and dozens of planes were flooding into South Ossetia and conducting air and missile strikes into Georgian areas controlled by Tbilisi. It's clear that Russia's political and military leadership executed a preplanned operation to forcibly and quickly change the status quo in Georgia.

Prime Minister Putin has tried to lay blame on the United States for "arming Georgians to the teeth." The reality is something quite different. In 2002, in response to Russian accusations that Georgia was harboring Chechen rebels in the lawless mountainous border region of the Pankisi Gorge, the U.S. initiated the Georgia Train and Equip Program, GTEP. The follow-on program, the Georgian Sustainment and Stability Operations Program, the GSSOP, trained and equipped Georgian forces for peace support operations in Iraq. Three Georgian brigades were trained through the GTEP and the two SSOP programs.

Since the training, Georgia has been the highest per capita contributor of troops in the war on terror. To date, 7800 Georgian soldiers have deployed to Iraq since the beginning of OIF, serving alongside U.S. forces. Over 50 served in Afghanistan during the elections in 2004 in that country. Four Georgian soldiers have paid the ultimate price and 19 more have been wounded while serving in combat alongside U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq. Georgia is among our staunchest allies in the war on terror.

While our defense and military relations with Georgia grew, to ensure transparency we provided regular briefings on GTEP and

the SSOP activities to the Russians. Unfortunately, it appears that the Russians have been unable to move beyond their Cold War zero sum thinking, as the actions of Russian military units to systematically eviscerate Georgian armed forces appear in part to be a revenge action for these capacity-building efforts by the United States.

The Department of Defense was deeply involved prior to and during the onset of conflict in an effort to convince leaders on both sides to de-escalate and refrain from resolving their differences by military force. The Secretary of Defense spoke with President Saakashvili on numerous occasions, including in November of 2007 and again in March of 2008 during bilateral consultations in Washington. Secretary Gates continued to speak with his Georgian and Russian counterparts during the crisis, urging restraint and stressing that all forces must move back to pre-August 6 positions.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff also spoke with his Georgian and Russian counterparts during this crisis. The consistent message was one of strategic patience and to find a peaceful resolution to the frozen conflicts, as Russia was clearly adding to the tension in order to provoke a Georgian response.

Russia's actions have caused a reassessment, not just of U.S. policies towards Russia, but of the European Union's, of NATO's, and beyond. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, of which Russia is a member, refused to endorse Russia's unilateral recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazian independence. In fact, it issued a statement reaffirming the principle of territorial integrity of states.

The European Union, under the leadership of the French presidency, met in an extraordinary session to criticize Russia's disproportionate military response, condemn Russia's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and postpone meetings of the EU-Russia partnership agreement. The G-8 is issuing G-7 statements to let a fellow member know that Russia's actions are not condoned by the larger group.

Georgia's NATO ambitions rest on fundamental shared values and a promise that NATO would keep its doors open to all aspirants ready to shoulder the responsibilities of membership. NATO has decided to further NATO-Georgian relations by establishing a NATO Georgia Commission.

What are we doing today? First, we must support Georgia. We seek to stabilize the situation on the ground, help the country recover and thrive economically, preserve Georgia's sovereignty, maintain our support for its territorial integrity, and assist in rebuilding its military. After the outbreak of hostilities, our primary concern is to stop the shooting and to help the people of Georgia. Our humanitarian efforts by air, land, and sea have mitigated the human suffering and exhibited U.S. steadfast support for the Georgian people in their time of need.

As we continue with our humanitarian relief, our primary effort now is to support Georgia and its democratically elected government. Last week, the U.S. rolled out a \$1 billion program in additional economic assistance to Georgia, which will help it weather the immediate needs caused by the current crisis. As we move forward, we look forward to working with the Congress on assistance

packages that best frame the U.S. commitment to Georgia and regional partners at this critical time.

Through September 8, 62 sorties have delivered more than 1,145 short tons of humanitarian aid. The USS MCFAUL, the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter DALLAS, and the USS MOUNT WHITNEY have delivered humanitarian supplies through the Georgian ports of Batumi and Poti.

Georgia, like any sovereign country, should have the ability to defend itself and deter renewed aggression. The Department of Defense is sending an assessment team to Tbilisi later this week to help us begin to consider carefully Georgia's legitimate needs and our response. After assessment of these needs, we'll review how the United States will be able to support the reconstruction of Georgia's economy, infrastructure, and armed forces.

For several years, the United States has played a significant role in preparing Georgian forces to conduct counterterrorism missions, first as part of an effort to help Georgia rid its Pankisi Gorge of Chechen and other extremists and then as part of multinational coalition efforts. It's worth noting that on the night of August 7th Georgia's best-trained military forces, which represented 20 percent of its Active-Duty Forces, were on duty in requirement in support of the multinational coalition effort there. Georgia in fact fielded the third largest national contingent to the coalition, behind only the United States and the United Kingdom.

We recognize, of course, that because of the events of the past month Georgia's own national security concerns may now mean it may be less able to contribute to such coalition efforts in the future. We'll be looking carefully and responsibly at Georgia's needs over the coming weeks and months.

U.S. efforts to help Georgia will not be undertaken by us alone. NATO's North Atlantic Council decided on August 19th to develop a NATO Georgia Commission aimed at supporting Georgia's relations with NATO. NATO has also decided to assist Georgia in assessing the damage caused by Russian military action, including to the Georgian armed forces, and to help restore critical services necessary for normal public life and economic activity.

NATO has already sent an Advisory Support team to Georgia, as well as its Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia, and the North Atlantic Council PERMREPs plan to visit Georgia in the near future.

The U.S. is also committed to support for our other friends and neighbors in the region, especially Ukraine, Poland, and the Baltic States, who have been threatened by Moscow. These countries must know that the United States is with them and, just as importantly, Russia must know the same.

As we continue to support Georgia and our allies, we must review our relations with Russia. We will not continue with business as usual. We've suspended our bilateral military interaction with Russia and are in the process of a comprehensive review of all activities.

The United States over the course of three administrations has sought to secure and sustain the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the new independent states of Eurasia. Concurrently, we worked to assist Russia in its integration into the

global economic community, as well as to facilitate Russian cooperation with NATO in the new post-Cold War Europe. Our policies contributed to a Europe more united and integrated through either membership or close association with the European Union and NATO.

We must not and will not allow Russia's aggression to succeed in Georgia, nor must we miss an opportunity to link arms in solidarity with our partners and friends in the region in the face of aggression. The U.S. has a responsibility to support Georgia and we'll be doing just that in the weeks and months ahead, and we must show Russia through our words, our policies, and our actions that it serves Russia's best interests, as well as those of the West, for Russia to take steps to end its isolation and work toward a constructive framework of relations with the U.S. and Europe.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for your time and I thank all the members for their patience, and I look forward to your questions. [The prepared statement of Mr. Edelman follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Secretary Edelman.
Secretary Fried?

**STATEMENT OF HON. DANIEL FRIED, ASSISTANT SECRETARY,
BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

Mr. Fried: Thank you, Chairman Levin and members of the committee, for the opportunity to discuss the policy implications of the Russian attack on Georgia. The statement I submitted provides detail and background to the conflict. In these comments, I will focus on our strategic response.

While the causes of the conflict between Georgia and the disputed regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia are complex, essential elements are clear. After a long series of provocations, Georgian forces moved into South Ossetia on August 7th. Whatever questions we have about this decision, there is no justification for Russia's response, which was to cross international boundaries and attack Georgia. This was the first time since the end of the Soviet Union that Moscow has sent military forces to attack another country.

The United States had urged Russia and Georgia numerous times, publicly and privately, to exercise restraint and to resolve their differences peacefully. After fighting broke out on August 7th, our efforts were focused on halting the violence and bringing about a ceasefire. On August 14th, Secretary Rice flew to France to consult with President Sarkozy, who is representing the European Union in efforts to negotiate a ceasefire. The next day, Secretary Rice took the ceasefire agreement to Georgia to clarify its terms and to obtain President Saakashvili's signature. She succeeded.

But Russia has yet to fully honor the terms of that ceasefire that President Medvedev also signed. Its forces remain inside Georgia. Worse, on August 26th Russia escalated the conflict when it recognized the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, in defiance of numerous UN Security Council resolutions which Russia itself had endorsed. This irresponsible and destabilizing action has since been condemned by the European Union, NATO, key allies, and the foreign ministers of the G-7 countries. Only Nicaragua and, I

should add, the terrorist group Hamas have so far followed Russia's lead and recognized these breakaway regions.

Our response to Russia's use of force to attempt to change international borders centers on three key objectives: First, we must support Georgia. We intend to help Georgia recover economically, restore its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and address its legitimate military needs. As an urgent priority, we support President Sarkozy's ongoing efforts to convince Russia to honor the ceasefire. Russian troops must leave Georgia and Georgian refugees must be allowed to return to their homes.

On September 3rd, Secretary Rice announced a major effort to help Georgia in its economic reconstruction. \$570 million, the first phase of a \$1 billion economic support package, will be made available by the end of this year, including emergency direct support to the Georgian government. We will work closely with Congress on details of this assistance and hope that there will be strong bipartisan backing for a second phase of support, an additional \$430 million to be provided in the future.

Like any sovereign country, Georgia should have the ability to defend itself and to deter aggression. So we are working with NATO to address Georgia's military needs and we are working bilaterally. The Department of Defense has sent an assessment team to Tbilisi to help determine Georgia's needs and with our allies develop an appropriate response.

Second, we must prevent Russia from drawing a new line through Europe. Russia should not be allowed to declare that certain nations belong to Moscow's sphere of influence and therefore cannot join the institutions of Europe and the trans-Atlantic region. The United States does not believe in spheres of influence. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, we have supported the right of every country emerging from communism to choose the path of its own development, including the international institutions with which it wants to associate. Russia should not be able to veto the right of sovereign countries to choose their own future.

This was one of Vice President Cheney's messages when he visited Georgia, Abkhazia, and Ukraine last week. And this is what "Europe, whole, free, in peace" means. This vision is not directed against Russia. On the contrary, we have always believed that this vision should include Russia. But Russia's actions at home and abroad have been increasingly inconsistent with the common values that constitute the foundation of the Euro-Atlantic community. The current aggression against Georgia shows that Russia is making a different choice for itself.

Finally, therefore, our strategic response must include longer-term consequences for our relationship with Russia. Since 1991, U.S. policy toward Russia was based on the assumption that Russia sought integration with the world and was, perhaps unevenly, moving toward greater democracy and the rule of law at home. Indeed, Russia expressed interest in and made progress toward becoming part of key institutions—the WTO, OECD, the G-7, G-8—and a partner with NATO and the European Union.

But with its invasion of Georgia, Russia has put these aspirations at risk. Russia has a choice. It can seek to be a nation at peace with itself and its neighbors, a modern, 21st century nation

that expresses its power and influence in constructive ways, or it can be mired in 19th century expansionist ambition, a nation whose standing in the world is based not on how much respect it can earn, but on how much fear it can evoke in others.

Russia cannot have it both ways. It cannot benefit from the international institutions it wants to join and also invade its neighbor and use war to change international borders.

We hope Russia chooses the right path. But for now we must contend with the Russia that exists today. We are guided by some general principles as we move forward. Russia should understand that the course it is on is already leading to self-isolation. The United States and Europe must work together to respond to the challenge Russia has presented and to help nations on Russia's border resist Moscow's pressure even as they maintain their reforms at home.

We must be steady, determined, and patient in our relations with Russia. Our response must keep open the possibility that Russia will reconsider its current course and we should keep doors open for cooperation on issues of mutual concern, such as Iran, counterterrorism, Afghanistan, nonproliferation, and other issues.

But we must also be prepared, if Russia continues its aggressive course, particularly against neighbors who want closer security relations with us and with NATO. We do not seek and are not doomed to have a bad relationship with Russia. But until Russia's leaders change this current path, they and we may be in for a difficult period ahead.

As we consider the implications of Russia's attack on Georgia, realism requires us to face what Russia has done and what we must do. We will support our friends and our principles. Russian aggression cannot be allowed to succeed. In time, Russia may realize that aggression against a small neighbor was a grave mistake. In the mean time, we need to maintain a framework for U.S.-Russian relations with the understanding that the perspective of today's Russian leaders will not last forever.

We will resist Russian aggression where we must, working with our friends and allies, and we will keep open channels of communication and even cooperation where we can, for history teaches that patience and determination, frustrating perhaps at first, tend to prevail in the end.

Thank you. I look forward to taking your questions. I would also like to say that I fully endorse the remarks of my colleague and old friend, Under Secretary Edelman. [The prepared statement of Mr. Fried follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Secretary Fried.

General Paxton or General Flynn, I understand you do not have opening statements. Is that correct?

General Paxton: That's correct, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

What we'll do is have an 8-minute round of questions for the first round, and when I call upon Senator Warner he'll have some additional time for any opening statement that he might wish to add.

Let me first ask you, Secretary Edelman and Secretary Fried, about the warnings that were given to Georgia. There was a great deal of public statements about these warnings that were given to

Georgia, but there's also an allegation that there was some mixed signals given to Georgia about what our response would be.

This morning you both very clearly indicated that we told the Georgians many times that they should not use military force, initiate any ground operations. I want to start with you perhaps, Secretary Fried, because you apparently had some of these conversations. Would you outline for us when and where those conversations took place where we urged the Georgians, warned the Georgians that they should not initiate any ground action against South Ossetia, or into South Ossetia?

Mr. Fried: Mr. Chairman, for many months I, my colleagues, and Secretary Rice had told the Georgians clearly and unequivocally that any military action initiated by them would be a mistake and lead to a disaster. We were not terribly subtle. We were not indirect. We were quite clear and occasionally blunt.

In the spring during a period of tension over Abkhazia, and I my colleagues made these points repeatedly to the Georgian leadership. Secretary Rice in her trip to Tbilisi in July made these points directly to President Saakashvili. As tension in South Ossetia mounted in the first week, the first days of August, we repeated these points and made them. On August 7th, as tension was mounting, we told the Georgians that they should not fall victim to provocations, that, whatever their fears and concerns, a military response would be a mistake.

It is true that we gave them warnings. It is not true that we presented them with mixed signals.

Chairman LEVIN. In the August warnings prior to August 7th, can you just be more specific? When and where were those warnings given, to whom, and by whom? Were you involved?

Mr. Fried: I was involved personally.

Chairman LEVIN. Over the phone, or—

Mr. Fried: Sometimes over the phone, sometimes in Tbilisi when I would travel there.

Chairman LEVIN. Before, before August 7th?

Mr. Fried: Yes.

Chairman LEVIN. In August?

Mr. Fried: In August over the phone. The weekend—let's see; that would have been August 1st. The weekend before, the end of July, first days in August, about South Ossetia.

Chairman LEVIN. And these were over the phone?

Mr. Fried: These were over the phone and in person with the Georgian ambassador. They were also when I traveled to Tbilisi with Secretary Rice, but also on my own. It was a regular feature of my discussions that I would urge the Georgians not to fall victim to any provocations.

Chairman LEVIN. What was their response?

Mr. Fried: Their response was: one, they knew that a military operation would be a disaster, but that if their villages were attacked and their people were under assault they would be under grave pressure to do something. To which I would invariably reply: That's not a good enough reason to make a wrong decision.

So the conversations were blunt, they were clear. It is true that the Georgians felt themselves to be and in fact were under severe provocation. Their villages were attacked. Russian forces—a Rus-

sian plane had shot down a Georgian drone over Abkhazia. Russian-led forces came into firefights with Georgians in Abkhazia. There were numerous provocations.

And we also had conversations with the Russians. But nevertheless, our messages were not mixed; they were quite clear.

Chairman LEVIN. Now, you both talked about the importance of there being consequences to the Russian aggression here against Georgia, and I'd like to know what are some of the consequences which are being looked at? What options are on the table? For instance, is keeping Russia out of the WTO on the table? Is that being looked at as a consequence? Secretary Edelman?

Mr. Edelman: Mr. Chairman, if I might, before going to answer that question I'd like to give a little more precision on the Department of Defense contacts with Georgians that paralleled what Secretary Fried described to you about his own efforts and those of his colleagues and Secretary Rice. I mentioned in my oral statement that Secretary Gates had met with and spoken to President Saakashvili in both the fall of 2007 and the spring of 2008. But we had other contacts as well. My colleague, Deputy assistant Secretary Dan Fata, who is sitting behind me, traveled to Georgia in mid-April after the Bucharest Summit, when tensions were particularly high over Abkhazia. He returned at the tail end of June, right at the—and beginning of July. And his visits are part of an ongoing bilateral defense dialogue that we have with Georgia, and we have consistently urged Georgia to show restraint, to avoid provocations.

Those conversations continued. Secretary Gates during the crisis weekend was on the phone with his defense counterpart, but also with President Saakashvili, and we always I think were sending a very consistent message.

Chairman LEVIN. Now, in terms of—what are the options which you're looking at? For instance, I want to just start specifically: Is keeping Russia out of the WTO an option being looked at?

Mr. Edelman: I think in general terms, Senator Levin, the major consequence to Russia is the isolation it's imposed on itself by taking these actions. You can see it in both—in cases like the WTO, where for instance Georgia is a member and therefore, because the WTO operates by consensus, there's a natural break on that process.

We have traditionally been Russia's biggest supporter in the WTO. But I think it's things like that. It's questions like how the G-7 will continue, G-8 will continue to operate in the future. Those are all things that are I think on the table now. But I defer to Secretary Fried because those are more in the diplomatic arena than in mine.

Chairman LEVIN. Just very—I want to go through a list of items as to what are we looking at in terms of consequences. Is keeping Russia out of the WTO one of those that you're looking at, Secretary? Just kind of quickly, yes or no or maybe?

Mr. Fried: We're looking at all of the range of options.

Chairman LEVIN. Does that include that?

Mr. Fried: Nothing is off the table. Everything—we're looking at everything.

Chairman LEVIN. That's fine. Now, what about working with Russia in terms of pressuring Iran to stop their enrichment program? Are we thinking about not working to persuade Russia, not working with Russia in that area? It's a critical area in terms of the world's security to keep Iran from getting—from their enrichment program. Are we seriously thinking about no longer trying to work with Russia to stop Iran from enriching uranium?

Mr. Fried: We would like to be able to continue to work with Russia.

Chairman LEVIN. But are we saying to Russia, we may not continue to work with you?

Mr. Fried: We have not sent that signal.

Chairman LEVIN. Is that on the table?

Mr. Fried: There are areas where we have common interests with Russia. We had these common interests before August 8th and we have them now.

Chairman LEVIN. And those therefore are not on the table to be changed, is that fair? Look, I think these are important, complicated issues, but I think it is important that we not send a signal, for instance, to Russia that we're no longer interested in working with her to stop Iran from getting nuclear weapons.

Mr. Fried: Quite right. And as I said, it remains in our interests to work with them. But we also want to look, we want to look at the totality of the relationship, and to draw conclusions. But the point is—your point, sir, is an accurate one. Working with Russia on Iran remains in our National interest.

Chairman LEVIN. Hopefully then is not on the table.

Mr. Fried: As I said, it remains in our National—it certainly remains in our National interest.

Chairman LEVIN. To?

Mr. Fried: To continue to work with them.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you. My time is up.

Now, Senator Warner, obviously take whatever time you'd like in terms of your own opening statement, plus your 8 minutes.

Senator WARNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll move along. We have a number of members here anxious to talk.

My first question to both Secretary Edelman and Secretary Fried, whichever is best qualified to answer it: At any time did the President indicate to the Secretary of Defense that we should put our military units on alert to engage actively in the repelling of the Russian forces and aiding Georgia?

Mr. Edelman: No, I do not believe that is the case, sir.

Senator WARNER. Do you agree with that, Secretary Fried? in other words, the use of force by the United States is not an option that was ever on the table then or now?

Mr. Fried: I believe that to be the case. It was not.

Senator WARNER. Who knows? You believe, you believe. Who knows?

Mr. Fried: I have—to the best of my knowledge, this option was never discussed. I never heard it.

Mr. Edelman: Senator Warner, I don't believe we were ever contemplating the use of force.

Senator WARNER. Fine, thank you.

General Paxton: That's correct, Mr. Senator. To the best of my knowledge, we never contemplated the use of force.

Senator WARNER. The statements that both of you made this morning, very good statements and pretty tough, used the verbiage we must support Georgia. And I agree. Clearly, Russia overplayed its hands. It's still a question of who threw the first punch. But anyway, what happened happened, and it did alter substantially the future relationships with Russia in the minds of not only the United States, but I think much of Europe.

But we're where we are, and we're trying to, I think, learn from this as to how best to react should another similar situation take place. Now, this morning in the New York Times there's an article by Tom Shanker, who is recognized as a very responsible analyst in this area, and Steven Lee Myers. It's entitled as follows: "The Bush Administration, after considerable internal debate"—"considerable internal debate"—has decided not to take direct punitive action against Russia for its conflict with Georgia, concluding it has little leverage if it acts unilaterally and that it would be better off pressing for a course of international criticism to be led by Europe. "In recent interviews, senior administration officials said the White House had concluded that American punishment like economic sanctions or blocking Russia from worldwide trade groups would only backfire"—it seems to me that is somewhat responsive to your question, Mr. Chairman—deep Russia's intransigence and allowing the Kremlin to narrow the regional and global implications of its invasion of Georgia to an old-fashioned Washington-Moscow dispute."

"Even as they vowed to work with allies, administration officials conceded that they wished the European Union had been willing to take a firmer action than issuing tepid statements criticizing Russia's conduct. But, the officials said, the benefit of remaining part of a united front made it prudent for the United States to accept the softer approach advocated by Italy and Germany, among other allies."

Does that article comport with the testimony that you've given this morning, Secretary Edelman and then Secretary Fried? Whoever wants to lead, lead.

Mr. Edelman: Senator Warner, I think that, to go back to one of the questions that the chairman posed to us about the implications of this set of events in August for the alliance, for Europe, for Europe's energy security, I think that's really the administration's point of departure. It seems to me that in the first instance as a strategic matter one of the things that Russia is attempting to do in the aftermath of the decisions taken at Bucharest about Georgia and Ukraine and their relationship to NATO is to recur to an earlier, unfortunate pattern that we saw in the Cold War of trying to—

Senator WARNER. Just a minute, Mr. Secretary. Just a simple question: Does this article—I assume you haven't read it yet?

Mr. Edelman: I haven't had a chance to read the article by Tom Shanker.

Senator WARNER. Well, I'm just trying to—

Mr. Fried: It does not fully reflect administration policy.

Senator WARNER. So it's at variance with what you have stated this morning; is that correct?

Mr. Fried: Yes.

Senator WARNER. That's what I wanted to know.

Mr. Fried: Part of it is right, part of it is not right in my view.

Senator WARNER. What parts are not right in your judgment?

Mr. Fried: It is not right that we consider the European Union response tepid. It is not right that we think we have no leverage. It is right that we want to work with Europe and we are far better off working with Europe than we are working on our own.

Mr. Edelman: Senator Warner, if I just might—

Senator WARNER. Yes.

Mr. Edelman:—what I was driving at with my answer was that what Russia has tried to do in the wake of Bucharest is drive wedges between NATO and Georgia and Ukraine. It's tried by its threats to Poland and some of the Baltic States to drive wedges between the newer and older members of the alliance. It's tried to drive wedges between the United States and NATO and the EU. And it seems to me that our large strategic interest is to make sure that that does not happen.

Senator WARNER. Well, that's true. But what I'm trying to focus on is the actual use of force and what are the circumstances under which we might become involved such as our forces have to be employed in defending Georgia or other areas. For example, my own study of the situation indicates that these cultural deep divisions, ethnic divisions, which really precipitated this, go back a century. Does anyone disagree with that?

And therefore, as we proceed to try and advance the cause of democracy in various parts of the world, we've got to be very conscious that a lot of these things are deep-rooted, deep-seated, and can start a flash fire which can burst on the scene into a major conflict.

That leads me to the question of the commitments, so to speak, to bring about admission of Georgia and the Ukraine into NATO. Now, everyone in the room probably knows this, but some may be following this hearing. Once in NATO, you've got Article 5, which says an attack on one is an attack on all. Had Georgia been in NATO, I assume that Article 5 would have required NATO to join Georgia with the actual use of force in defending its sovereignty. Would that be correct?

Mr. Fried: Yes.

Senator WARNER. Now, that brings me to a situation that concerns me deeply, as it does other members. We're now in a conflict, a NATO conflict, in Afghanistan. 26 nations of NATO, I think almost all, are in some way, sometimes minor, but involved in that conflict. 15 of those nations are permitting the use of their forces in that operation subject to what we call national caveats.

Now, those caveats vary, but essentially they're to protect their forces from being engaged in actual conflict with risk of life, loss of limb. The United States, Great Britain, Denmark, Canada do not have those national caveats.

What concerns me is that this action in Georgia, this confrontation, brings to the forefront this issue of admission of new nations, the potential set of conflicts that they bring to the table, and con-

sequently all members of NATO must recognize that they could be involved in an actual shooting war.

How are we going to address in the European theater now as we look at the advancement of democracy the admission of nations and the problems concerning these caveats? Speaking simply for myself, I do not want to see the American GI begin to take on another conflict where there are no restrictions whatsoever on the use of our forces, yet other nations that might be drawn into one of these conflicts will assert these caveats and not perform the risk operations.

Now, Secretary Edelman, how do you wish to address that issue? And I point out the very courageous statement by the Secretary of Defense when he said the following: "Moreover, NATO is already at risk of becoming a two-tiered alliance of those who are willing to fight and those who are not." Mr. Gates said in a speech at the Munich Conference on Security Policy in February 2008: "We must not"—"We cannot become a two-tiered alliance of those who are willing to fight and those who are not. Such a development, with all of its implications for collective security, would effectively destroy the alliance."

Now we see a case in point, where I think, fortunately, Georgia is not a member of NATO, because had it been it would have required the invoking Article 5 and then we're faced with another situation of possibly utilization of the National caveats.

How do we address that in the future?

Mr. Edelman: Well, Secretary Warner, you've raised I think two very important questions, both of which are matters of serious concern. The first is the question of caveats, to which we are opposed as a matter of principle. The caveats I think it's fair to say have asserted themselves in NATO operations outside of what had been regarded as the traditional theater of operations, which was the alliance per se, that is to say in the various stability and peace-keeping operations that NATO's been involved in in the Balkans and now in Afghanistan.

We're opposed to caveats and I quite agree that it would be impossible—it would have been impossible for the alliance during the years of the Cold War to have operated with caveats and to have defended Europe. You just can't be prepared to defend Europe if some people are only willing to fight in some parts of the theater or on certain days of the week or whatever the caveat is.

So I quite agree, we have made caveats a big issue. You've cited Secretary Gates's Verkunda speech. It was a subject of discussion at both Riga and at the Bucharest summits, and we have made some progress, but not enough, on eliminating caveats. For instance, I think under the new government in Italy a number of the caveats in Afghanistan have been lifted. So I think we've made some progress there.

But it's not possible to have an Article 5 guarantee if there are caveats on national forces in place. I think that's absolutely correct. We will need, I think, now unfortunately to address the issue of making sure the Article 5 guarantee is clear and understood and credible. I believe it is a credible guarantee to those who are currently members of the alliance. I think it's arguable that had Georgia been a member of the alliance perhaps Russia would have acted

differently in the light of the Article 5 guarantee. That's a hypothetical. We don't know.

But I think it's absolutely crucial that all members of the alliance understand the responsibilities that Article 5 imposes. We have heretofore since NATO began to enlarge in the 90s operated in an environment where the presumption was that NATO was a partner—Russia was a partner for NATO, not an adversary. Unfortunately, Russia's behavior in the last month has now called that into question and that's going to have to be reassessed. I believe that that's an issue which the defense ministers when they meet next week in London, and certainly we'll be discussing Georgia, will be addressing, as well as in their regular defense ministerial a month later in Budapest. And I suspect the foreign ministers when they meet in December will have to address that question as well.

So it's something that we have to now take on as an alliance to make sure that we have in place what we need to in order to make Article 5 a credible guarantee.

Chairman LEVIN. Secretary Fried, if you could briefly comment, and then we'll move to Senator Lieberman.

Mr. Fried: In addition to my colleague's points, I'd like to address Senator Warner's question about NATO enlargement and issues of local conflicts, ethnic conflicts. NATO enlargement has proven to be a strikingly effective mechanism for resolving disputes between nations and we saw in the process of NATO's enlargement to Central Europe and Eastern Europe in the 90s that disputes that had plagued these countries in the past tended to vanish or become greatly attenuated as part of the NATO enlargement process. So as a result of NATO enlargement, we saw a Europe whole, free, and at peace coming into being, instead of a return to national conflicts.

That said, we have to be careful as NATO continues to look at enlargement eastward. NATO membership for Georgia and Ukraine is not on the immediate agenda. What is on the immediate agenda is a so-called membership action plan, which is not an offer of membership, it is not a promise of membership. Rather, it is a program under which countries can prepare and get themselves ready for membership, a process which usually takes a number of years.

Senator WARNER. I think we have to thank you very much.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Warner.

Senator Lieberman?

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Thanks, Secretary Edelman, Secretary Fried, and Generals. Perhaps I should begin this way. The world changed on August 8, 2008. That's not my statement, though I fear there may be some truth to it. That's a statement, roughly paraphrased, made by President Medvedev of Russia, and echoed in various terms by Prime Minister Putin. And it tells us the challenge that we face now from a resurgent Russia based on the words of its leaders.

Of course, this is profoundly disappointing, because I think it is fair to say that since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union the policy of the United States and of our allies in Europe has been to engage Russia in a constructive partnership, even hoping for the day when it would be an alliance.

I want to pick up, Secretary Fried, on what you said about NATO. It seems to me that NATO was created with two great purposes in the 1940s. One was the obvious one of uniting the Nations of Western Europe to be prepared militarily to resist a Soviet movement on the ground into Western Europe.

But the second—and this was of course pre-European Union. The second was to create an institutional framework in which the National rivalries within Europe, which had resulted in centuries of war, could be resolved. In fact, that has been an effect of NATO. I'd say without NATO there never would have been a European Union, struggling as it may be to come into its full existence. And as you said, Secretary Fried, that's been true with other internal minor ethnic conflicts, not so minor in some cases, in Central and Eastern Europe.

You know, I can remember times at the aforementioned Verkunda Atlantic Alliance Conference in Munich when a number of people said quite rationally that we might look forward to the day when Russia would become part of NATO if it met the requirements of democratic government and the rest. But the Russians have chosen a different course and it's a fateful decision, and I think it's one that we have to take as seriously as your statements this morning and the administration, NATO, and the European Union have taken it.

I appreciate the statements you've made. I think they reflect an administration policy that in my opinion has been principled, realistic, clear, direct, and appropriately measured, because we're trying very hard to do as much as we can in response multilaterally.

It also seems to me that, though I know, as you testified, Secretary Fried, that we urged the Georgians not to take military action in either of the disputed provinces, you also—and I appreciate it—testified this morning that the Russians were provoking the Georgians. Their movement into South Ossetia was not an unprovoked action and the Russian response, as you, Secretary Edelman and Secretary Fried, have said, was also greatly disproportionate.

So the question is what are we going to do now in a way that's sensible, that's practical, that's realistic, and that leaves no doubt in the mind of our allies in Eastern Europe particularly and the Russians that we're not going to go back to a sphere of influence foreign policy in Europe. Our policy is to let every nation determine its own destiny.

3 weeks ago today actually, Senator Lindsey Graham and I went on this day to Kiev and Ukraine, then on Wednesday to Georgia, and then Thursday to Warsaw. I want to state that the reaction of the leaders of the governments of Ukraine and Poland are intense. They have lived under Soviet domination. They are fearful of what the Russian movement into Georgia portends for them, and real anxiety. Of course, Poland is already a member of NATO, so the consequences of that are quite serious.

I want to ask a couple of questions, if I may. The first is on the question of military assistance to Georgia. They're not asking for our troops as I hear them. They're asking primarily, as they told Senator Graham and me, for anti-aircraft weapons and anti-tank weapons. They're not in a fantasy world. They know if the Russian

army wants to move over Georgia they're not going to be able to stop them. But they think if we give them that or NATO helps give them that that it will, one, be a statement of our support, the most tangible statement of our support for their sovereignty; and two, that they may be able to at least delay or raise the costs of a Russian, further Russian movement into Georgia.

I take it from what's been said today that we're sending out an assessment team and we're prepared to consider, hopefully along with our NATO allies, giving the Georgians some military assistance that goes beyond the counterterrorism assistance that we've given them so far, which is not much help in a fight with Russia? Secretary Edelman?

Mr. Edelman: Senator, first of all, thank you for your remarks. I agree with the tenor of everything you said and it seems to me that both Secretary Fried and I today have expressed a desire on the part of the United States that this not be necessarily a final statement of Russia's direction, that Russia still has opportunity to recalculate the value to its national interest of what it's done and what it might do in a different way.

With regard to the question of military assistance to Georgia, we support Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and one of the primary attributes of sovereignty is the ability to defend yourself. So there should not be any question about whether Georgia is entitled to military assistance from the United States or indeed from NATO or any of the NATO allies.

We do have an assessment team that is in place now. They're looking at various aspects of this, trying to assess first the damage to the Georgian military forces, understand what has been lost in terms of equipment and facilities, and get some sense of the scope of what it would take to just rebuild that capability. We have a NATO assessment team that'll be going in shortly as well.

I do think we want to do this in a very measured and calibrated way. It requires first understanding the situation in terms of capability that exists, capability that might need to be built, and reaching some understanding with Georgia about what capabilities it thinks it needs and how they might be employed.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thank you.

Secretary Fried, let me ask you this question. When Senator Graham and I were in Kiev and we met with President Yushchenko, he quite explicitly expressed fear that the Russians were beginning to follow a pattern in Crimea that was quite similar to the pattern that had been followed in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, where there are Russians there who are citizens of the Ukraine, they're not Russian citizens, but the Russians according to President Yushchenko have already issued, the Russian government has already issued 70,000 passports, Russian passports, to Russian Ukrainians living in Crimea. Of course, this is a historically strategically important section with access to the Black Sea and the rest.

Are we—are you fearful that Russia, certainly if we don't respond in a strong and united way to what they've done in Georgia, may follow a similar course in Crimea? That's certainly President Yushchenko's fear.

Mr. Fried: We are indeed concerned by the implications of President Medvedev's assertion of a sphere of influence in general and in particular his assertion that Russia has the right or certain rights with respect to Russian citizens living abroad. When you combine that with the fact that Russia can create these citizens by the act of handing out Russian passports, it has of course raised concerns in our own minds as well as in Ukraine's.

Ukrainian territorial integrity should not be questioned. Tomorrow I am going to Kiev for discussions following up on the Vice President's discussions there. But there is no doubt that Ukrainians are concerned and, unfortunately, there is some basis. And a strong response by Europe and the United States to Russia's attack on Georgia is important, not just for Georgia's sake, but for the sake of other countries that may feel themselves under great pressure.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thank you both, all four of you, very much for your strong leadership.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Lieberman.

Senator Martinez?

Senator MARTINEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, gentlemen, and thank you all for your testimony and for your service.

It seems to me that the consequences of Russia's actions are broader than even just the area of immediate influence. I have watched an area of the world that I closely watch, which is Latin America, and this morning there are news reports of Russia now engaging in naval exercises with Venezuela, which when added to the commentary of a month or so ago that they might be placing strategic bombers in Cuba raises questions about a tit for tat type of spheres of influence sort of response, along with many of the statements made by President Medvedev as well as Prime Minister Putin raise concerns about a reassertion of a Russian empire.

So the question about whether or not Russia was provoked into this action or we gave mixed signals to Georgia, I resolve those fairly easily in my mind. When I visited Georgia and was in South Ossetia 2 years ago, it was very clear then that Russia was treating that area as part of Russian territory. When you drive into Tskhinvali and the first thing you see is an enormous billboard of Vladimir Putin, it gives you a hint of how they view the situation there.

So my question then has to do with Ukraine and how we view a potential membership of Ukraine and Georgia into NATO.

I know that there was a lot of discussion of this in recent months and it didn't occur, and perhaps not occurring, not having happened, was further impetus for Russia to take the very aggressive action that they took in Georgia and might be an added invitation for them to look at Ukraine.

So how do we at this point—what do we do to prevent a similar set of circumstances occurring in Ukraine to what occurred in Georgia, since the patterns seem terribly similar and Russia's intentions seem rather clear? Secretary Fried?

Mr. Fried: We believe that the emerging democracies in all of Europe have a right to choose for themselves the institutions to which

they want to belong, and that applies to Georgia and Ukraine. As I said earlier, an actual invitation to join NATO is not on the immediate agenda. But what is on the agenda and what was discussed prior to the Bucharest NATO Summit is an invitation for the so-called membership action plan, which is a program to let these countries do the hard work that they have to do to qualify for NATO membership.

It is our belief that the qualifications of these countries to join the alliance ought to be a function of their own reforms, their own readiness, and the alliance's own decisions about whether their admission would advance European security.

Senator MARTINEZ. Excuse me, Mr. Secretary, but the issue of a few months ago, candidly, was not their readiness. We admitted several, did not admit these two because of Russia's heated objections. And frankly, I think the weakness that NATO showed in not admitting these two perhaps may have been a part of the calculations that Russia made in taking the aggressive action that they took.

Are we not—I understand about the process of preparing yourself for admission. That doesn't seem to me to be what the issue really is with the Ukraine and Georgia. It was more about NATO's willingness to have an Article 5 relationship with these two nations. Is that not correct?

Mr. Fried: We strongly believe that there should be no new line in Europe and that Russia should not be allowed to assert that there is a line and that nations on the eastern side of this line have no right to determine their own future. We believe very strongly in this and so does NATO as a whole. At Bucharest NATO made the decision in the communique that Georgia and Ukraine will become members of the alliance. That was a signal that NATO will not recognize a Russian sphere of influence. This decision was important. It was not made casually. It was not made by lower level people stuffing language into a communique. This decision was made by the leaders themselves. That's an important decision and we need to stand by it, I quite agree with you.

Senator MARTINEZ. Two other quick things in the time I have remaining. One, I wanted to ask about whether membership, continued membership in the Group of 8, or other similar tangible steps should be taken, or is the United States urging that they be taken? We talked about—the chairman asked about a range of options, were they on the table or not. Are we pushing for some tangible steps that will exact a price beyond this perceived isolation, which I frankly am not real sure that I see?

Is there going to be a cost to Russia for their naked aggression, for their brutal aggression, and for their threat of equally brutal aggression for their neighbors? What is the U.S.'s response?

Mr. Fried: Senator, I think Russia has already incurred a substantial cost. I think they have been isolated. I think that the condemnation by the European Union, by NATO, by the foreign ministers of the G-7 countries, by individual leaders, has been strong and swift. Russia's isolation can be judged by the fact that so far only Nicaragua has recognized South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

At the moment, our emphasis is on getting the Russian troops out of Georgia, working with the French and the European Union

to get Russia to honor the ceasefire that President Medvedev has signed. We will work carefully and systematically through the questions that you and the chairman raised. Those are fair questions and fair points. First let's get the Russian troops out, let's help Georgia recover, stabilize itself, and let's think through very carefully the consequences for our relations with Russia working with Europe.

Senator MARTINEZ. To that point, General Paxton, I would like to know two things, if you would, on the military end. One is the issue of cyber warfare. We understand that Russia employed some sort of cyber techniques as part of their invasion of Georgia. And second, the current status of Russia's withdrawal and where are they actually today?

General Paxton: Thank you, Mr. Senator. If I may, sir, I'd like to address the second one, which is the status of the Russian force laydown, and then my colleague General Flynn will discuss the cyber side, sir.

On the force laydown, we did monitor the existence of the tripartite peacekeeping force that was in South Ossetia and we watched the buildup of forces through the Roki Tunnel during the first ensuing days, particularly the first 2 or 3 days, and then we knew about when they peaked, and we're tracking now to ensure that, when you look at Sarkozy's six-point plan, we're trying to ensure that they get down below pre-hostility levels.

So we do track the force levels of the Russian battalions and other units, not only in South Ossetia, but in Abkhazia, sir.

Senator MARTINEZ. This may be the only time in the history of the world the aggressor force also gets to be the peacekeeper. But anyway, on the cyber issue. My time has expired, so if you can quickly just answer on that point.

General Flynn: Very briefly, the issue of cyber attacks. We know—or cyber efforts. We know that there were some conducted. What is unclear is if they were state-sponsored, being Russian-sponsored by the government.

Senator MARTINEZ. What's not clear or was clear?

General Flynn: It remains unclear.

Senator MARTINEZ. It remains unclear.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Martinez.

Just a quick comment and then I'm calling on Senator Nelson. You said, Secretary Fried, a minute ago that there's been no promise of NATO membership to these two countries. The Bucharest Summit said: "We agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO." I'm going to leave it at that because I don't want to take time out of my turn. But it seems to me it's a direct conflict.

Senator Nelson?

Senator BEN NELSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen. You know, we're assuming that Russia cares about the public relations. I heard Secretary Edelman talk very close to something about redemption. Secretary Fried said something close to they've already paid the costs. We're assuming that they care, that this is important to them as to how they're viewed in the rest of the world.

Russia doesn't have to join NATO to have influence in Europe. They have it already. It's called energy diplomacy. With the reliance of Western Europe in Russia's natural gas, Russia already can do whatever it chooses to do as long as it has those strings that it can pull. There are constant reports about their willingness or their ability to do that. It's been suggested that they've already engaged in some energy diplomacy with the Ukraine. If you control 40 percent or more of the natural gas in Western Europe, NATO becomes somewhat irrelevant, particularly if it's in danger of becoming a two-tier system. Why would you want to belong to that organization when you already have the influence you have and a growing influence?

I visited the offices of Gazprom. I've seen their pipeline charts and their projected pipeline charts. As I recall, I saw a projected pipeline into North America.

Let me ask this. Would you think that it's quite possible that the situation has been altered, as the chairman suggested, and that, I think as Senator Lieberman suggested as well, that they have now charted a different course? Is that a possibility, that we're trying to use a paradigm that may not apply to the way they're thinking? And if that's the case, we're going to only frustrate ourselves and not be successful in achieving any kind of diplomacy with the rest of Europe.

Either way.

Mr. Edelman: Senator Nelson, I guess I would say that we don't definitively know the answer, dispositively know the answer yet.

Senator BEN NELSON. Well, but is that a possibility, that this is where it's heading?

Mr. Edelman: Yes, it is a possibility, and I think I alluded to that in my opening statement, that this may very well be the direction that they are headed in. We hope not and we want to make it clear that it doesn't have to be this way, that the choice is up to Russia how it wants to conduct itself with regard not only to the NATO allies, but its neighbors, and whether it wants to abide by the norms and the values of the institutions that it has said over the last 15, 16 years that it aspires to join.

That's been the basis for the policy of three American administrations, that we ought to take them at their word, try to integrate them into these institutions.

Senator BEN NELSON. Excuse me, but you know the former republics don't take them at their word. I'm not sure I understand why we're anxious to do that.

Mr. Edelman: I think it's not a question of anxious. I think it's the policy that has been, as I said, undergirding three different presidential administrations. I think before we discard it we need to test the proposition and find out what direction Russia is really going in.

I very much agree with your comments about the importance of energy and energy security. This is an issue that has precipitated discussion among the defense ministers of NATO back in the time when the gas cutoff to Ukraine took place. I think the attacks in Georgia this month highlight the importance of Georgia as an energy transit country so that we can maintain diversity of supply for both gas and oil, in addition to the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline.

The issue of Europe's energy dependence on Russia unfortunately is an old one. It goes back more than 20 years. The United States I think under administrations—

Senator BEN NELSON. It's even more significant today than it was then.

Mr. Edelman: It's more significant than it was then, but the point I was trying to make is that we've had a number of presidential administrations of both parties that have had the same view, I think, which is that Europe must have diversity of energy alternatives in terms of sources and transport.

Senator BEN NELSON. Certainly the Ukraine is. They came and talked to me about ethanol.

In trying to understand what's going on and project for the future, I think it becomes very important, as you're indicating, that we look at their actions as well as their words and try to understand what's going on and not take them simply at their word.

I noted that Poland—Secretary Fried, you said that Poland seemed to be motivated to move more quickly on the missile defense agreement as a result of the action in Georgia by Russia. Do you have any thoughts about what Russia's motives may have been and whether they had assumed that Poland would back off or that the Czech Republic would back off or Azerbaijan would be less friendly toward the United States? Do we have any thoughts about that?

Mr. Fried: I can't speak definitively to Russian motives or Russian thinking. But if that is what they thought, then they were badly mistaken. Countries such as Ukraine and Azerbaijan and NATO allies such as Poland and the Baltic States have reacted vigorously against Russia's attack on Georgia. They have led in Europe for a strong European response.

The Vice President's trip to Azerbaijan and Ukraine shows that these countries are looking to the United States for leadership. They welcome our support. Far from being intimidated by the Russians, they are determined, it seems, to safeguard their own sovereignty, which has been so hard to regain.

And by the way, I also, sir, agree with your point about energy. It has been the policy of this administration and the previous one to support efforts to diversify sources and routes for energy to avoid Russian monopolies.

Senator BEN NELSON. One final question. You mentioned that you're coming forward with a proposal for about a half a billion for economic recovery efforts in Georgia. Have any of the other aligned countries, whether NATO or the European Union, have they stepped forward? I know President Sarkozy has shown an interest and talked directly to the Russian officials. Have they put up or offered to put up any money as well?

Mr. Fried: Not to the extent we have.

Senator BEN NELSON. To what extent, then?

Mr. Fried: Smaller amounts of assistance, mainly humanitarian.

Senator BEN NELSON. How small?

Mr. Fried: Tens of millions of dollars from various countries. I can provide this in detail.

Senator BEN NELSON. I would like to see it. [The information referred to follows:] [COMMITTEE INSERT]

Mr. Fried: Mainly humanitarian. The European Union is preparing to do more and they're talking about an international conference to support Georgia. We've made the decision to move out first, early, set a standard, but also help the Georgian economy stabilize itself. So we moved out promptly and we hope that Europe follows quickly.

Senator BEN NELSON. Well, we hope that they follow with their coins as well as their words, because that's going to really dictate what this future looks like for Georgia and for the Caucasus.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Nelson.

Senator Thune is next, to be followed by Senator Webb. Senator Webb is able to stay on beyond his own time. Thank you for being able to do that because I'll be necessarily absent for about half an hour. And then he can call on Senators after he's done himself.

Senator Thune?

Senator THUNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank Secretaries Edelman and Fried and also General Paxton and General Flynn for being with us today and for your service to our country.

Secretary Edelman, I understand that with Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states 2 weeks ago there were very few, if any, other countries that have followed suit and officially recognized the independence of these two states. In fact, my understanding is aside from Nicaragua there isn't any other country that's officially recognized the independence of those two countries.

By way of comparison, Kosovo's independence last February was recognized by 46 countries, with 17 countries recognizing their independence within the first week after Kosovo declared it. All of the G-7 nations have recognized Kosovo's independence.

In your estimation—and I pose this to both Secretary Edelman and Secretary Fried. In your estimation, what does that comparison say about the notion that Russia's invasion of Georgia marked an end to the post-Cold War world or that a major shift in the distribution of power has occurred?

Mr. Edelman: Senator Thune, I think what it speaks to most is the weakness of the Russian argument that its actions in Georgia and its recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states are somehow following on the Kosovo precedent. Kosovo was in some sense *sui generis* because it was an action that came at the tail end of a decade of upheaval that led to 250,000 deaths and millions of people being displaced, a number of UN Security Council resolutions, and Kosovo's status was regulated under Security Council Resolution 1244.

None of those circumstances, obviously, apply in this instance. So I think, notwithstanding the hyperbolic and inflated rhetoric that has emanated from some in Russia about their actions being in response to, quote, "genocide," unquote, I think in the international community as a whole there is recognition that there is really no substance to that comparison. And I think the factors or the facts that you've quoted about who recognized what I think speak to that.

Not only have only Nicaragua, has Nicaragua been the only country I'm aware of that has recognized this, but, as my colleague testified, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization refused to endorse it. The Collective Security Treaty Organization, which is made up of the states of the former Soviet Union, did not endorse it. So I think, that to me speaks volumes about the weakness of this so-called precedent.

Senator THUNE. Do you have anything to add?

Mr. Fried: I agree with my colleague's point. I would simply add that it also speaks to Russia's diplomatic isolation on this question.

Senator THUNE. The other question I had for either or both of you has to do with Russian military and diplomatic officials making some very serious threats against our NATO allies Poland and the Czech Republic regarding the missile defense sites that we have reached agreement to build in these countries. Last month, after Poland agreed to host ten missile interceptors to defend against a potential strike by Iran, the Russian deputy chief of staff said that Poland would be open to a military strike and possibly even a nuclear strike.

Earlier this year when we reached agreement with the Czech Republic to house a missile defense radar there, the Russian foreign minister published a written statement that said: "If the real deployment of a U.S. strategic missile defense system begins near our borders, then we will have to respond using not diplomatic but military technological methods."

Given this pattern of reckless behavior on the part of Russia, do you view these statements as simply rhetoric, more hyperbolic rhetoric, or something that we should be taking at face value? In other words, the question I would have is how seriously should we be taking these threats?

Mr. Edelman: Well, I think both are true. I think the rhetoric is pretty hyperbolic, but I think we have to take the threats with the gravest seriousness. These threats I think are baseless and they come in the face of a very concerted effort that both Secretary Fried and I have been involved in to assuage Russian concerns about the interceptor sites. Russia failed to mention in most of these discussions that they themselves already have nuclear-tipped missile defense interceptors arrayed around Moscow. Our interceptors not only are not nuclear-tipped, they have no explosive warhead. They are purely kinetic kill vehicles. And the notion that ten of them in Poland, clearly aimed at deterring an Iranian missile threat that is developing, and in order to protect our allies, just as the missile defense system that we are deploying at Fort Greeley and Vandenberg Air Force Base will ultimately defend the United States against those threats, seems to me to be consistent with what the United States has practiced throughout the postwar, post-Second World War period—making sure that the defense of Europe and the United States is coupled.

The idea that these are a threat to Russia and that they should call for threats of retaliation, much less nuclear retaliation, on the countries hosting them seems to me to be totally out of keeping with the precepts that we have been operating on with Russia since the end of the Cold War.

Senator THUNE. Secretary Fried, there are recent press reports that indicate Russia is planning to use its position in negotiations with Iran as a bargaining chip against the United States. How would you assess Russia's cooperation on the subject of Iran in the past and have they been much of a help? Doesn't a nuclear-armed Iran pose a threat to Russia as well? Just comment generally, if you would, on some of those questions.

Mr. Fried: Russia has been a constructive partner in the P5 plus 1 process with respect to Iran's nuclear program. We have worked closely with Russia. The so-called incentives offer that we made, that the P5 plus 1 has made to Iran, came about through, among other things, work with the Russians.

It certainly seems to be in Russia's interest to work with us because a nuclear-armed Iran would be a threat to them. I have also heard what you have, sir, that the Russians intend somehow, or have talked loosely about using, trying to use their cooperation on Iran as leverage. I don't see how they would, and in any event we are going to try to work with the Russians in areas where we have common interests, but I cannot imagine circumstances in which we would bargain away the rights of sovereign countries for the privilege of working with the Russians in areas of common interest.

Senator THUNE. There's a report that Russia's going to soon deliver or may have begun delivering new, much more sophisticated anti-aircraft systems to Iran. In fact, there was an ABC News report on July 9th stating that Iran is expected to take delivery of the SA-20 missile shield system from Russia by the end of the year, which I think is contrary to remarks made today by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates. That's actually a quote from July 9th.

But I guess—and maybe this is a question for our military members of the panel, for General Flynn today, too. But is the assessment of Russia's delivery of these systems to Iran something that we ought to be concerned about? How long will it be until these systems are up and running? And if delivered, what does the capability of the systems mean to the military balance of power in the region?

General Paxton: Senator Thune, with your permission let me just give a preliminary answer and then I think General Flynn will be happy to talk about some of the details.

Unfortunately, Russia has provided a lot of conventional military support to Iran. In general, I don't think that has been as helpful as some of their diplomatic efforts have been. The missiles you point to and the reports you point to in particular are something we watch very carefully because it is a very serious capability that would be a concern to us, as well as others in the region, and we do watch it very closely.

To the best of my knowledge, I don't believe that the missiles that were referred to in the ABC report are in fact slated for delivery by the end of this year. But it is something that we are watching very closely.

Senator THUNE. General?

General Flynn: I would just add that I would agree with the time line. We don't see it by the end of this year. The significance of that type of weapons system put into Iran would change certainly some

of their capabilities and it's something that we would be clearly concerned about.

I would just add that in order for Iran to acquire that kind of a weapons system they have to go through a whole series of training and understanding how to apply it, etcetera, etcetera. So there's a number of issues that we would be monitoring and working very closely with our allies to ensure that we understood the time line if in fact they decided to deliver that weapons system into Iran.

Senator THUNE. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Webb [presiding]: Thank you, Senator Thune.

As it turns out, I am next. I would like to begin, as is so often the case, by stating that I'm in strong agreement with the senior Senator from Virginia in the approach that he took to his questioning and the concerns that he raised. The question from I think both of our perspectives is not so much philosophical alignment or diplomatic agreement. It is the circumstances under which the United States must feel compelled to respond militarily in these sorts of situations.

This is a region, as you all know, whose history is scarred by these sorts of entanglements. If you go back to World War I, World War I started because Austria gave an ultimatum to Serbia, and because Austria was involved Germany got involved, because Serbia was involved Russia got involved, and because Russia got involved France got involved, and because France got involved England got involved.

We need to be very careful in sorting out what is an alliance and what is not. If you look at the movement in NATO, the new movement in NATO, I think if we were to apply historical terms we have been bringing in a series of protectorates in traditional terms rather than allies. You would define an ally as a nation that actually bolsters your security or your collective security by joining. A lot of these countries, it's hard to imagine their meeting that standard.

As Senator Warner said, if Georgia had been a NATO member when this incident occurred, despite the tempestuous nature of the leadership in Georgia that was something of lighting a fuse on it, we would have had a different set of responsibilities to be looking at as a country.

Secretary Edelman, you were I think very careful in your comments to use the word "disproportionate response" when you talk about the Russian actions. Would you say that there was a response that would have been appropriate? What would have been Russia's—what would have been the limits of disproportionality on Russia's response?

Mr. Edelman: Senator Webb, as Senator Lieberman pointed out in his questioning, there's no question that Russia has been provoking Georgia for some time. Because there was some uncertainty, as there always is when you have these kinds of periods of tension and conflict in a place as remote as the Caucasus, I think we've used the word "disproportionate" because if you accept it, the premise that Russia had, which is that it was protecting its 500 peacekeepers in South Ossetia and that it was trying to stop the

attacks, the artillery strikes on Tskhinvali, there would have been no need to go beyond the administrative borders of South Ossetia, to take up positions along the M1-M27 highway, which is the east-west lifeline of Georgia, to take military actions that might at least arguably suggest an attack on the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, and to systematically go after every element of Georgian military—

Senator WEBB. So basically you're talking about the proportionate nature of the response when you go into that detail?

Mr. Edelman: Correct.

Senator WEBB. I haven't had access to classified material, but I have read that ten Russian soldiers were killed in the initial action by Georgia. Is that correct?

Mr. Edelman: I'd have to defer to General Flynn for the actual casualty numbers. I'm not sure we actually know the numbers yet because there's still some confusion.

General Flynn: The initial contact, which we believe was between some police elements in South Ossetia and some Georgian military forces, the outcome of that is still to be assessed. The numbers range from a small number such as ten, and I've seen reports upwards as high as 200 in the initial probably couple of hours of contact.

Senator WEBB. Well, these are the kind of situations I think that give a lot of people pause when we talk about expanding NATO in the way that we've been expanding it.;

General Paxton, we received a reprogramming request yesterday from DOD on the Armed Services Committee here to transfer \$30 million from the 2008 O and M funds account to the overseas humanitarian disaster and civic aid account in order to provide humanitarian relief to Georgia. Are you aware of that?

General Paxton: Only in the general terms, Mr. Senator, that we are considering that. I'm not sure what that is specifically tied to, though, no, sir.

Senator WEBB. So you're not aware of the \$30 million transfer that's being proposed?

General Paxton: Well, I defer to—

Senator WEBB. Are any of you gentlemen aware of it?

Mr. Edelman: I'm aware of it, Senator Webb. I think it's because the OHDACA account had been run down by a variety of other humanitarian contingencies and we wanted to make sure we had sufficient funding to continue the humanitarian efforts.

Senator WEBB. Do you know where that would be coming out of in terms of the O and M accounts?

Mr. Edelman: Specifically where the comptroller would be reprogramming money from, I'm not aware of that, Senator. But we can get you an answer for the record. [The information referred to follows:] [COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator WEBB. All right, I'd appreciate that.

I think Senator Pryor—is he—Senator Bayh.

Senator BAYH. Thank you.

Gentlemen, thank you for your service.

I'm reminded of a couple of things here this morning, one in the distant past. I think there's a passage from the History of the Peloponnesian War, which I was required to read as a young man, and I think it's called "The Melian Dialogue," in which the Athe-

nian general announces to the citizens of the island of Melos, who were interested in negotiating with him, that in his point of view "The strong do as they will; the weak suffer what they must."

Here we are this morning. And I update that to a conference in Prague a few years ago I was privileged to attend on the subject of U.S.-Russian relations. A prominent figure in the Russian government gave us a presentation and, frankly, I found it to be rather breathtaking. He basically said: We've concluded we don't need you. Where we have interests in common, as both of our secretaries this morning have outlined, we'll work together with you, and he mentioned preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. I don't think he mentioned Iran, but I think that's on the list. There may be a couple of others.

But he said: Other than that, we just don't—we have other interests, you're not that relevant to us, and we're going to go on our way. And here we have it again this morning.

So I would like to follow up, Secretary Fried, on something I think you mentioned. It seems to me that these individuals leading Russia right now, they care about power, they care about wealth, they care about military capability, they care about territory, the acquisition and the occupation thereof. I mean, these are hard-nosed, bottom line kind of individuals.

When we say that they have, quote, "paid a substantial cost," close quote, I really wonder if they look at it that way. Perhaps in diplomatic circles people may look at it that way. They've been condemned. They've been diplomatically isolated. Do they really care about that kind of thing? They don't strike me as individuals who care that deeply about that kind of thing?

There are reports now floating out there that they may be sending nuclear experts to Iran or they may be welcoming Iranian nuclear scientists to Moscow. I assume that's just sort of to tweak our nose a little bit. But in any event, these are the kind of individuals that we're dealing with.

So when we have interests in common, we will work with them. When our interests diverge, we need allies and we need leverage. Our allies are somewhat weakened because of their dependency on Russian oil and gas. We need to focus on reducing that. We need to reduce our own dependency on imports of energy.

But my question simply to the two secretaries is this: Where is our leverage? What kind of leverage do we have that they care about? It strikes me that simply verbal condemnation and diplomatic isolation may not be enough to get the job done. So what is our leverage, and if we don't have enough how do we get some?

Mr. Fried: Senator, what you heard in the conference in Prague is typical of a certain strain of Russian official thinking. I've heard it, too. You gave a quite accurate account.

I don't think Russia is ten feet tall and, although their bank accounts are full of money earned by exporting oil and natural gas, Russia has substantial weaknesses. And I think they're mistaken, the Russian leaders are mistaken, if they think they can, like the Soviet Union, live and prosper in their own world apart from the West. Their demographic situation is terrible and not going to improve soon, demographics being a very unforgiving science. Their economy is unbalanced, with their exports highly dependent on

natural resources. That is, it is a value extracted more than a value added economy, in contrast to, say, China.

Russia will require capital investment and a sustained period of cooperation with the world for its economy to grow for some time to come.

Senator BAYH. Now you're on to something here. Are you suggesting that the recent adverse reaction in the markets and possibly adverse impacts on future investment in Russia will have a restraining effect on them? Where is the leverage, Mr. Secretary?

Mr. Fried: Businesses have always been concerned about problems of the rule of law in Russia. The events in Georgia may tend to underscore these concerns. And you're quite right that a couple of communiqués that use the word "condemn" by themselves, if this is all there is, does not constitute a lasting lesson.

But it is a pretty good beginning, and Russia is not as well placed to prosper in isolation than was the Soviet Union. The population is half the size, they don't have a bloc of countries, of European countries, as enforced allies. Russia is ill placed to have a hostile relationship with the world.

It is true that there is a lot of triumphalism in the official Russian media. But over time I think cooler heads may prevail.

Those are good questions, Senator, and we are going to have to look at this in a systematic and thoughtful way in the months ahead. Our priorities now are to help Georgia, work with Russia's neighbors. But the questions you raise and that others have raised are good ones and these are the ones we're working with. I'm just trying to outline some of the parameters in our underlying thinking.

Senator BAYH. Secretary Edelman, I'm interested in your thoughts as well.

Secretary Fried, I just would comment or ask, and perhaps one of the two of you can follow up. The reaction of the markets was good. I've seen what's happened with the Russian stock market and the reduction in commodities prices which has taken place for other reasons may face them with some difficult financial decisions, reminding them that they don't, even with the wealth they have, they don't live in isolation.

But is there anything that we as a government can do to follow up on the action of the marketplace to sort of drive that home, to give us some more leverage? That's just a question I would have. Secretary Edelman, do you have any—

Mr. Edelman: I was just going to say I agree—

Senator BAYH. It sounds as if you read the Melian Dialogue at some point, too. You were nodding your head.

Mr. Edelman: I had a misspent youth as a history graduate student, Senator Bayh, and one of my teachers was Donald Kagan at Yale University. So I spent a lot of time reading the Melian Dialogue with Professor Kagan.

I think I was actually going to pick up on your very good point, I think, about the Melian Dialogue. I think it's been the hope of successive American administrations since the collapse of the Soviet Union that we were moving into a world where the rules and the norms by which civilized nations would conduct themselves would not be the rules of the Melian Dialogue, where people would

not judge the greatness of the country by its ability to inflict a lot of pain on its smaller and weaker neighbors or intimidate them into bending to its will.

The difference I think between earlier periods where people had to deal with the Soviet Union and the era we are in now, where we deal with Russia, is precisely those factors of the globalization of the international economy that my colleague adverted to in his answer. Those are stringencies that don't require the U.S. Government necessarily to do anything. Those are things that are just the inevitable workings of the international economic order.

I think it is our hope, I think, that on sober reflection, as I said in my statement, members of the Russian elite will think twice about this, precisely because this is not just about the sort of regard in which they're held in the western world. It is about things that are closer to their bottom line.

But I would not dismiss totally, as someone who spent several years serving in what was then the Soviet Union and who learned the language and has spent many visits back there, I would not underestimate the degree to which their own self-regard is to some degree tied to the regard in which they're held by the rest of the world. It's not an inconsiderable factor for them, and it's one I think that we have to—

Senator BAYH. They're not indifferent to reputational concerns.

Mr. Edelman: I think you may hear a lot of rhetoric right now, as you have heard and as I have heard and as Secretary Fried has heard, that they're back, that their coffers are full of energy money and they don't have to pay attention to any of this. I think over time, I think they may have reason to have second thoughts about that.

Senator BAYH. Well, let's hope. It seems like a rather slender reed, but let's hope. So the bottom line—and my time has expired—I hear you saying, while we may not have a great—the demographics, those sorts of things are working against them, but that's something we don't have much impact over. While our leverage may not be great, we're really relying upon their appraisal of their own self-interest, which we believe they have misapprehended. Is that kind of the bottom line there?

Mr. Fried: We tend to think of our response on three levels. The first is to defend Georgia so that its sovereignty is not crushed, in which case Russia will have succeeded in grabbing two small provinces and nothing more.

Second and, as Senator Martinez pointed out, we need to help the other countries in the region—as you pointed out, sir—the other countries in the region that feel themselves at risk.

If we succeed in those first two, then the third level, which is the long-term implications for Russia, has more weight, we have more time. Administrations love to think in terms of short time lines. That's what we've got, the news cycle, the calendar to the next election. But historic shifts and strategic movement takes place in its own time. The forces of the market, the forces of international isolation, are extraordinarily powerful, but they don't happen by themselves. This isn't an invisible hand argument. This is an argument for making it clear that Russia's costs will mount over time.

Some Russians, even today, are beginning to make that point cautiously, because it isn't actually a free press over there.

Senator BAYH. Thank you very much, gentlemen.

Senator WEBB. Thank you, Senator Bayh.

Senator Clinton?

Senator CLINTON. Thank you very much.

I think this is a tremendous opportunity for us. The questions that have been raised about our relationship with Russia going forward deserve the closest of attention and certainly an attempt to forge a bipartisan consensus similar to what we forged during the Cold War. I think that whatever allusions might have existed with the fall of the wall in Berlin have certainly been tarnished, if not eliminated, but there doesn't seem to be much that has taken their place.

So I would urge that we take this opportunity, especially because we are moving to a new administration, to create a commission here in our own country—I know that President Saakashvili has called for an international commission, which I hope will be established, and I hope the United States and our NATO allies will promote that vigorously—to create such a commission to in the first place determine the actual facts, because there is a dispute about the facts which may or may not be real, but has certainly infected the dialogue and will therefore impact whatever thinking we have going forward.

I believe that the administration would be well served to create this U.S. commission, which then could cooperate with the international commission. In the absence of the administration moving on this, I will be introducing legislation to establish such a commission. Obviously I hope the administration does it without legislation, although I think there are members of Congress who would be worthy members of such a commission were it to be established.

I also think that as we promote the idea of the international commission it would be important to keep up a dialogue with Russia. To that end, I am somewhat troubled by the withdrawal from the nonproliferation efforts that we were engaged in. I think we ought to be able to hold competing thoughts in our mind at the same time. Is Russia more aggressive? Are they more intent upon pursuing their own interests as they define them territorially, economically, politically? Of course they are. I don't know why anybody's surprised about that. But therefore, rather than seeking to isolate them, which I think is not a smart proposal, we need to be much more strategic. And I don't know that it's in our interests for the administration to withdraw the nonproliferation agreement that you had negotiated.

So I hope that we can take this opportunity to really think deeply about what deterrence in the 21st century means, what our geopolitical interests are. Senator Webb and Senator Warner raised the questions about NATO. I probably disagree with where their questions are leading, but I think it's fair game for us to debate and discuss that.

I want to turn to General Paxton and General Flynn and ask either or both of you, were you surprised by the outbreak of these hostilities in Georgia? General Paxton, General Flynn?

General Flynn: Senator Clinton, as we said earlier, we tracked the, in quotes, if you will, "peacekeeping" force that was there and the buildup of forces. You can always I guess reasonably expect something could happen, but in terms of the speed with which it happened and the extent that it came, as Ambassador Edelman said, it was disproportionate to us. We knew that there was available forces north of the Roki Tunnel in Russia. We knew that there had been some summer exercises, which is not out of the norm. And we knew that they have the potential to do things. But we had neither the expectation that it was going to happen to that degree and certainly to that size and speed.

Senator CLINTON. Did you also track the railroad construction and the reinforcement of infrastructure, like the depots, to facilitate the movement of heavy equipment?

General Paxton: Yes, ma'am. To answer your first question, personally yes, I was surprised at the disproportionality, the duration, and what I would say is sort of their tactical commitment to what they eventually achieved.

The hindsight from my perspective, because just coming into this, when we look at what preparations and the exercise that was conducted, that started on about the 15th of July and didn't end until about the 3rd of August, and some of the military and preparation, tactical preparation kinds of things that they did, I think when we look at it and we reexamine sort of what did we know, when did we know it, there's probably a lot more to the element of tactical surprise that we should probably be taking some lesson from.

Senator CLINTON. Well, I appreciate your saying that, General, because obviously that's within the bailiwick of this committee and I'd think that it would be worth some time to look at a lessons learned from this.

I want to submit for the record an article that appeared in the Washington Post on July 15th by Ronald Asmis, who is with the German Marshall Fund, and it's called "A War the West Must Stop." Just the first sentence says: "There is war on the air between Georgia and Russia. Such a where could destabilize a region critical for western energy supplies and ruin relations between Russia and the West."

So clearly there were observers, experts, there were people who follow this area and what's happening inside Russia and on Russia's borders who were prescient, who basically said this is a war we must stop. One of the purposes of this commission that I am advocating for our own country is, we've got to answer for ourselves, did we embolden the Georgians in any way? Did we send mixed signals to the Russians? I think it's important that we understand that there is a lot of debate and ferment around what the United States Government really did say, how clear we were with Moscow, how clear we were with Georgia.

I think we need to sort all that out, and the military aspect of this with respect to the signals, the intelligence, the information, how it was assessed, I think is an important part of it. So clearly that should be in my view part of what this commission looks at.

I thank the witnesses.

Senator WEBB. Senator Nelson?

Senator BILL NELSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm interested since in the 90s Georgia tried to abolish the South Ossetian autonomous region and they were trying to forcefully integrate South Ossetia into Georgia. What do the South Ossetians think? Do they think of Russia as a protector or an invader?

Mr. Fried: It depends. The short and honest answer to that question, Senator, is it depends on which South Ossetians you talk to. Over the last couple of years the Georgians had offered increasingly generous peace plans to the South Ossetians and the Abkhaz, seeking to settle this conflict diplomatically. They had offered, the Georgians had offered extensive autonomy to the Abkhaz. They had reached out to the South Ossetians as well.

There was in South Ossetia before the conflict two competing leaderships in South Ossetia. One was more for integration with Georgia with autonomy and the other was more pro-Russian.

That said, the roots of the South Ossetian-Georgian dispute do go back to the wars of the early 1990s. Plenty of mistakes, plenty of ugly things happened all around. Our effort, sir, was to promote a peaceful and diplomatic solution. And as my military colleague says, as the warnings grew louder, as the tension mounted, we increased our diplomatic efforts, working with the Europeans, Germans in particular. To no avail as it turns out, we were trying to work hard to avoid this problem.

By the way, in answer, although she's not here, but in answer to Senator Clinton's remark, Ron Asmis and I did indeed warn President Saakashvili. That was one of our warnings over the summer, that there was a moment of danger this summer. We did this in July in Dubrovnik. It was part of the record of consistent messages that we sent to the Georgians.

Senator BILL NELSON. Well, what's in the future? Is it independence? Is it Russia or is it Georgia?

Mr. Fried: We believe in and support Georgia's territorial integrity. So do our European partners. So do all other countries in the world, with the so far exception of Nicaragua. So we support a long-term effort to re-integrate these territories into Georgia. We do not support independence. We do not support annexation by Russia.

Senator BILL NELSON. But you say that depends on who you ask then.

Mr. Fried: In South Ossetia.

Senator BILL NELSON. Yes.

Mr. Fried: Yes, it does.

Senator BILL NELSON. I would assume that they would have something to say about it. So that's my question: Are a majority of them wanting to be in Russia, Georgia, or independent?

Mr. Fried: I don't know of any reliable polls, but in our view Georgia's territorial integrity should not be held subject to a poll in South Ossetia under these circumstances. We have maintained support for the territorial integrity of countries as a rule and we don't believe in separatism as a rule. We need to stabilize the situation in Georgia, and what seems impossible now may not seem impossible in a long time to come.

I hope it doesn't take decades. I notice that in Cyprus, after all the bloodshed, the tension, the division of the island, there are

leaders on both sides of the island who support reunification. Now they're engaged in serious talks on reunification. After 1974, for many years this would have seemed impossible, unthinkable, but there you are.

So we shouldn't dismiss what seems impossible, what seems impossible now, and we shouldn't harden that into a rule forever.

Senator BILL NELSON. Well, I'm just trying to get the practical lay of the land, not what we want. And I agree with you, that's what we want.

I first went to Cyprus and saw that division in the early 1980s and I thought it was going to be very difficult to—and it seems so silly, the way they had drawn the lines and people came and went and so forth. And it only took 30, 35 years, but it's happened.

Well, let me ask you this. You know, the Russians took very great umbrage at the way we supported the independence of Kosovo. Was that a contributing factor to them going into Georgia?

Mr. Fried: Oh, I think it was more in the nature of an excuse, and not one that stands up to any serious scrutiny. The independence of Kosovo followed nearly 10 years of UN administration, followed a Security Council resolution that envisioned a final status process. It followed years of negotiations trying to come to a compromise. It was a unique situation, not at all applicable to South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and indeed you can see that by the way the Europeans have reacted. No European country has recognized South Ossetia or Abkhazia. Two-thirds of the European Union, more than two-thirds now, has recognized Kosovo, as well as all the G-7 countries.

Mr. Edelman: Senator Nelson, if I just might add to my colleague's answer. I think there is—one reason why I hope that there will be sober second thought and reflection in Russia about the direction they've gone in is that, although I don't think Kosovo is a precedent for what they've done, what they've done starts to raise questions and precedents inside Russia itself about Chechnya, about Ingushetia, about Tatarstan, Dagestan. What they have done potentially is very, very dangerous for their own self-interest again and I hope that they will reconsider it.

Senator BILL NELSON. That's a good point, particularly with regard to Chechnya.

Tell me, is the oil flowing, the gas flowing in the pipelines right now?

Mr. Fried: The Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline gas is flowing, I believe, and that pipeline is south of the conflict zone. I'm not sure whether the oil is flowing in the Supca pipeline, which is north, which is closer to the conflict. I also believe the gas is flowing in the Shakdeniz pipeline. Again, that runs south of the conflict area.

Senator BILL NELSON. Is that the one that goes into Turkey?

Mr. Fried: Yes, sir.

Senator BILL NELSON. And to the Mediterranean?

Mr. Fried: The Shakdeniz pipeline and the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline go to Turkey, yes, sir.

Senator BILL NELSON. So you think that's flowing?

Mr. Fried: For the moment.

Senator BILL NELSON. At the moment.

This Georgia crisis, what did it do to European energy markets?

Mr. Fried: In the immediate term, I do not believe that there was a spike in oil or gas prices. But obviously there is a great deal of concern that Georgia's ability to act as a reliable transit country has now been at least for the moment put in some question. I think as the situation stabilizes, as the EU observers go in, as the Russian forces withdraw, as they must do under the ceasefire, and as Georgia recovers, these concerns may abate.

But it is certainly true that Europe is now more than ever focused on the need to diversify its energy sources and to avoid any one country having a monopoly of transit routes.

Senator BILL NELSON. I certainly hope so.

Mr. Chairman, may I ask one final quick question?

General, from a military standpoint, since Russia now says it's allowed to keep peacekeepers, what do you expect peacekeeping activities to mean?

General Paxton: Mr. Senator, we probably have a difference in philosophy and terminology between "peacekeeping" and "monitoring," if you will, because there has to be an agreement on both sides that there is a sustainable peace that is worthy of keeping right now. So we are in the monitor mode at this point, sir. We're looking to see that all six points of the arrangement that Sarkozy looked at are being held, which first and foremost is the cessation of hostilities. Second is a return to the pre-conflict positions, and it's then at that point that you can see what type of either peacekeeping or monitoring force you may need to establish the sustainment of those conditions, sir.

Senator BILL NELSON. Do the diplomats have any different answer on that? I'm talking about what the Russians expect the peacekeeping activities to be?

Mr. Fried: You raise a very interesting question. The six-point ceasefire accord that General Paxton referred to requires all the Russian forces to leave Georgia, and it says also that the Russian peacekeepers that can remain in South Ossetia and Abkhazia have to be limited in number to those authorized under previous agreements.

Now, today we read that the Russians are saying they're going to keep actual military forces, more or less brigade strength, in both territories. If that's true, it's inconsistent with the ceasefire. So we have to see what they think they mean.

But we have supported President Sarkozy's six-point ceasefire agreement. From what we hear of what he achieved, what he achieved in Moscow yesterday, that sounds pretty good to us. But we want to see the Russians implement all of it and all of the six-point accord without renegotiating or reinterpreting its terms.

Senator BILL NELSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Levin [presiding]: Thank you, Senator Nelson.

We'll have a 4-minute second round.

Secretary Fried, you've earlier this morning said there's been no promise of NATO membership to Georgia. It seems to me that that is inconsistent with the Bucharest Summit statement, which is that "We the NATO members agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO." It also seems to be inconsistent with the statement of Vice President Cheney in Georgia, where he said: "Georgia will be in our alliance." Those sound like promises

to me, but yet you say they have not been promised NATO membership.

My question to you is, how do you reconcile your statements here with the statements of Vice President Cheney and the Bucharest Summit?

Mr. Fried: I'm familiar, of course, with both statements. In my remarks I said that there has been no invitation extended to these countries and that's the context under which I meant a promise. There's been no invitation to these countries. There has been, both at the Bucharest Summit and a statement the Vice President reflected in his trip, that yes, some day Georgia and Ukraine will be members of the alliance. Before we get to the point of actually, NATO actually extending an invitation to these countries, these countries have a lot more work to do. That's recognized by everyone. They have—the things they have to do are things only they can do.

But what the NATO leaders agreed in Bucharest and what the Vice President was reflecting is a statement that these countries are on a track to membership if they make the reforms that they need to make and that they have not been consigned to a Russian sphere of influence or a grey zone. So that's how I would reconcile them. A perfectly fair question, Senator.

Chairman LEVIN. The ifs were not in the statements that were made at the Bucharest Summit, I believe. They may have been, but they surely were not in the Vice President's statement. There were no ifs, and's, and but's. It wasn't that if they comply with the NATO conditions. It was they will become members of NATO.

You're being much more cautious as to what you now are saying that NATO meant in the Bucharest Summit: If they comply with NATO's conditions, that then some day they will be invited to become a member of NATO. That's much more cautious than the Vice President was. So while you've made an effort to reconcile them, I don't think you fully conceded—succeeded in doing so, which is no fault of your own.

Mr. Fried: I don't—I honestly don't see the difference. I understood the NATO—I was at Bucharest and I'm familiar with the leaders' statement, and it was a strong statement. It was the right statement to make, and that means that we are recognizing that these countries have a right ought join the alliance, that they are on a membership track, that we have not recognized a Russian sphere of influence. That's how I see that statement and I believe that all recognize that both of these countries have much work to do, including them. They recognize it.

Since Senator Warner is back, I would like to say that the questions he raised and that Senator Webb raised are perfectly valid questions and we have to think of them seriously, but it is important and remains important that we signal to these countries that their future with the alliance is a function of their own progress in making reforms and our own decisions, not a function of somebody else's veto.

Mr. Edelman: Mr. Chairman, if I might just—

Chairman LEVIN. It sounds like these are not, however, in your mouth unconditional commitments to membership. They are conditioned upon these countries meeting the membership requirements

of NATO and they're conditioned upon a decision of NATO to then invite these countries to become members. Is that fair?

Mr. Fried: It is very fair to say that NATO has not invited these countries to membership, to join the alliance. It is also fair to say that the Bucharest decision was not a NATO invitation and all the leaders understood that. It was a very strong and proper statement that these countries have the right and that their path to NATO membership will not be encumbered or blocked by an outside power. So yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. I just want to be very clear on the one part you leave out when you repeat what I said, that membership invitations are also conditioned upon those countries meeting the membership requirements of NATO.

Mr. Fried: Yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Okay.

Mr. Fried: Without qualification.

Chairman LEVIN. Fair enough.

Mr. Edelman: Mr. Chairman, if I might rise to my colleague's assistance for just one second, not that he needs much from me. But I think it's fair to say that both the Bucharest statement and the Vice President's statement were statements of the alliance's intent to have these countries join. But all the members who have come in since the first round in 1997 at the Madrid Summit have had to go through a series of hoops to get there. In any event, even the heads, as powerful as they are, ultimately are not the dispositive voice because all of these countries, once an invitation has been accepted, have to go through the process of having their adherence to the treaty ratified by all of the parliaments, and indeed this body.

Chairman LEVIN. It sounds like something less than unconditional promises to me. We'll let others make that judgment. The promise of the Vice President sounds unconditional: You will become a member of NATO. That is an unconditional commitment. What you're saying here is that the path that they're on is conditioned on a number of things occurring, and that strikes me as being very different.

But I'm going to leave it at that because I want to ask you about the Patriot deployment to Poland, and I think this probably goes to you, Secretary Edelman, and maybe to General Paxton as well.

Senator WARNER. Let me just have one question.

Chairman LEVIN. That's fine.

Senator WARNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Earlier I asked about whether any U.S. forces had been put on alert and I think we got in the record a very clear response. But I'd like to have the parallel question: Were there any requests from the president of Georgia or other high-ranking officials for the U.S. to provide active military support for the Georgian military? [Pause.]

Mr. Edelman: I was just taking counsel with my colleague because there were a variety of different conversations that went on. But I'm not aware of any requests. The chairman had a conversation with his Georgian counterpart. Secretary Gates had conversations with his Georgian counterpart and with President Saakashvili. I'm not aware of any requests for U.S. forces. There

was a request for the U.S. to use its influence with Russia to get them to stop what they were doing.

Senator WARNER. That's understood.

Secretary Fried?

Mr. Fried: Same. I'm not aware of any.

Senator WARNER. General?

General Paxton: Mr. Senator, the only specific request that we received on the military side—there was already a caveat in the deployment of the Georgian brigade in support of multinational force that was preexisting. It was in the event that they needed them for the defense of the homeland would we assist them—

Senator WARNER. That's understood.

General Paxton: And we had that one, sir.

Senator WARNER. General Flynn?

General Flynn: No, sir. Just as my colleagues have stated.

Senator WARNER. Well, I'd like to go back. I think one of the great values of this hearing—and I commend our chairman for first holding the hearing and then pressing on the issue of the conditions which Georgia might face if and when NATO considers their admission as members. Is a part of that process dwelling on the issue with a new member, are you going to assert caveats for the use of your forces to NATO? Is that part of the process? Because we've got to come—I say "we"; NATO's got to come to grips with this issue of caveats. It's just totally unfair in my judgment for the American GI, the British tommy, the other soldiers of Denmark, Canada, and several others who are out there doing the heavy lifting and fighting and taking the risks in Afghanistan, then to be asked, if they were required under Article 5 to engage on the European continent in some sort of conflict, to be confronted once again with this issue of caveats.

So is it part of the process to determine—I tell you what. I'd prefer you try and answer that for the record. [The information referred to follows:] [COMMITTEE INSERT]

Mr. Edelman: We'll get you a fuller answer for the record, Senator Warner.

First of all, I agree completely with your concerns about caveats. Secretary Gates shares them. I think all of us do.

Senator WARNER. But we've got to do something about them.

Mr. Edelman: Right.

Senator WARNER. I think we're fighting in Iraq as we're—I mean Afghanistan—as we're sitting here.

Mr. Edelman: Right.

Senator WARNER. Asking of these men and women of the armed forces to take these risks.

Mr. Edelman: I think it's a point well taken. I think no one can enter the alliance with a caveat about enforcing Article 5. That I think is very clear, and I'm not aware of any nation that's adhered to the alliance that has done that.

The issue brings itself forward when we deal with things like SFOR and KFOR and ISAF. That's where we have the problem.

Mr. Fried: I'd also like to mention, sir, that many of the newer NATO allies have contributed combat forces in Iraq and Afghanistan without caveats and have done a lot of hard fighting. The

Poles, when we asked, put in a combat battalion, combat helicopters—

Senator WARNER. You're correct.

Mr. Fried:—to go to the east, where it's hot. So they have pulled—a lot of the allies have pulled their weight.

Senator WARNER. And Denmark should be added to that group.

Mr. Fried: Denmark, Canada, The Netherlands in the south. A lot of very tough fighting. The Rumanians, Estonians. So allies before and after 1989 have come in to do the hard stuff.

Senator WARNER. But as the chairman in his questioning said, there's been a lot of bravado and statements made in support of Georgia, but to the average citizen that translates into the potential use of U.S. forces to carry out that bravado and those—we don't want to end up like a paper tiger, talking about how strongly we're going to support them, but when it comes down to a combat situation, understandably, we'd have to say differently.

We've got to be extremely cautious in these situations, because they're going to come up from time to time. Russia is feeling, as we say, feeling its oats right now and we don't know where the next issue may come up. But let us learn from this one how to be very careful in our comments with regard to the support we're going to give that nation that may be afflicted by another one of these problems.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Your answer to the question whether if Georgia were a member of NATO we would have been obligated to come to their defense was unambiguous. The answer was yes. Is that answer unambiguous and unconditional even if a country—now put aside Georgia for a moment. But if a country that is in NATO initiates a military action against a non-NATO neighbor, against the advice of all of the NATO members, and then that neighbor attacks the NATO member with disproportionate force, is NATO obligated under Article 5 to come to the defense of the NATO member that initiated the ground activity against the advice of NATO?

Mr. Fried: Article 5—

Chairman LEVIN. Could you give me a yes or no on that, or a maybe, and then explain your answer?

Mr. Fried: Article 5—

Chairman LEVIN. I think your answer to that last question is no, that you can't give me a yes, no, or maybe. Is that right?

Mr. Fried: You've offered—well, Mr. Chairman, you've offered a hypothetical and it's always difficult and usually dangerous to try to answer hypotheticals.

Chairman LEVIN. So the answer is maybe.

Mr. Fried: Article 5 has to mean what it says, which is that essentially an attack on one is an attack on all.

Chairman LEVIN. It says more than that, doesn't it?

Mr. Fried: If a nation is attacked—

Chairman LEVIN. It has to be acting in their defense, self-defense. My question was if they initiate a ground attack against a non-NATO neighbor and that neighbor responds with disproportionate force, does that automatically trigger Article 5? That's my question. And where NATO had given advice, don't attack that non-NATO neighbor, just to make it harder for you.

Mr. Fried: Oh, it's hard enough.

As I said, hypotheticals are difficult and dangerous. But I do appreciate—the question you ask is a serious one and NATO is not an aggressive alliance. Article 5 is not intended to support aggression. There has not been a case of a NATO member committing aggression against its neighbors. One of the criteria for NATO membership is that countries have good relations with their neighbors. That's one of the things we've looked at since the NATO enlargement process began in the early 90s.

So that's by way of answering what I think may be a tough question, but it's not an unfair one. It's a relevant one. So we don't look at Article 5 as some kind of license for irresponsible behavior, and so far in the history of NATO there have not been these sorts of cases.

Chairman LEVIN. In your judgment, was Georgia's action against our advice irresponsible?

Mr. Fried: I think there will be time once we have more detailed information of what exactly happened on August 7 to make that judgment. They certainly took this action against our advice, that's true. They believed at the time, at least they said at the time, that they thought the Russian forces were coming through the Roki Tunnel and they were in imminent danger. I'm unable to tell you now whether or not this was true, but I know that it was true that they said so, because they said so to me.

Senator WARNER. Thank you.

This I think, as I mentioned, is for either Secretary Edelman or General Paxton. It relates to the Patriot battery that is going to be deployed in Poland. My question is is this going to be a fully operationally effective Patriot battery?

Mr. Edelman: I can start and then General Paxton may want to fill in some of the technical detail, Mr. Chairman. I think our undertaking is to provide a rotational presence with a battalion, a battalion-plus really—it's an engagement package, I think. And we will have a presence for each quarter for some period of time while we engage in some training activities. I think the Poles have indicated they may in the future want to make purchases of their own Patriots, and I think that's what our intent is.

But I don't think, at least in the initial stages, it will be a fully operational capability 24–7.

Chairman LEVIN. So it's intended, at least at this stage, that this be a rotational training capability, is that correct?

General Paxton: That's basically correct, Mr. Senator.

Chairman LEVIN. And the Poles understand that, that this is not going to be a fully operationally effective battery? Do they understand that?

Mr. Edelman: Initially, and I think that our hope is that ultimately, as I said, with a combination of training and purchases, they will have a full capability at some point in the future.

Chairman LEVIN. All right.

Is NATO scheduled to take up applications of Ukraine and Georgia in December for a membership action plan? And if so, has that plan been filed, those plans been filed by those two countries?

Mr. Fried: Yes, sir. Membership action plan is on the agenda for NATO to consider at the December foreign ministerial.

Chairman LEVIN. So membership action plan that has been— have they been filed, do you know?

Mr. Fried: Well, these—

Chairman LEVIN. Are they prepared, and if so by whom?

Mr. Fried: These countries have asked for it, and the membership action plan is essentially a work program that develops over time of what these countries have to do to qualify to meet NATO standards.

Chairman LEVIN. So there's no draft plan for either country that is at NATO?

Mr. Fried: I don't believe so. But these plans are developed between the country and NATO staff, and in our experience they're very rigorous. They go on for some time and they have been successful in the past.

Chairman LEVIN. As of this time, you don't know whether or not these plans have been completed for consideration by NATO?

Mr. Fried: I don't know what NATO's decision will be in December.

Chairman LEVIN. No, not decision. Whether the plan that they're going to look at has been drafted.

Mr. Fried: You mean the work program?

Chairman LEVIN. Whatever the plan is.

Mr. Fried: I don't know whether it has been completed. We have experience with this in the past with respect to Albania, Croatia.

Mr. Edelman: Mr. Chairman, my ever-alert staff has pointed out to me that I misspoke when I answered your earlier question. It's a battery plus, not a battalion plus. I stand corrected.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

What we're going to do now is move to what I think will be a brief executive session. We thank our witnesses for their being here, for their information, and we will stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:00 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]