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and Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Trade.**

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee of Foreign Affairs, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am Edward Lozansky, President of the American University of Moscow and World Russia Forum. I am honored to appear before this Committee today. I thank the Committee for this opportunity to discuss whether it is in the interest of the United States to graduate Russia from the Jackson-Vanik Amendment (JVA).

My opinion is clear and unequivocal. Yes, this graduation is absolutely necessary and long overdue. It had to be done almost 20 years ago when Communism collapsed and the new country which has emerged on the ruins of the USSR, the Russian Federation, has lifted all restrictions not only on its citizen's rights for emigration and travel but has eliminated even such term as exit visa from the legal procedures vocabulary.

Having been separated by the Soviet authorities from my wife and child for over 6 years since they could not get such an exit visa, I can relay, with a very strong sense of personal gratitude, my appreciation for America's help to reunite my family and the families of hundreds of thousands of my former compatriots. The Jackson – Vanik Amendment played a very important role not only in the process of lifting restrictions on emigration but on the whole process of democratic and human rights developments in the countries of the former USSR.

When we were finally reunited my wife and I had the honor to personally thank Senator Jackson, Senator Dole, Senator Moynihan, Congressman Kemp, and over 100 Members of Congress for getting closely involved in our case and for introducing and voting for this Amendment. We also thanked personally President Ronald Reagan in the Rose Garden ceremony on May 21, 1983 on the occasion of celebrating Andrei Sakharov Day which was declared by the U.S. Congress on that day.

However, it is time to rethink our strategy and reevaluate the relevance of the JVA in the context of U.S. – Russia relations at the present time.

First, we must acknowledge that with all its deficiencies in the democratic development contemporary Russia is a new state which is not identical or similar to the Soviet Union. With no restrictions on emigration and travel I strongly believe that now the JVA is not only obsolete but even harmful to U.S. interests. Every political initiative has its timed limits. What was good 30 or 40 years ago may not be appropriate today.

This is not just my opinion of one individual. It is shared by huge numbers of people both in the United States and Russia and, moreover by the majority of American and Russian Jewish organizations who applauded the JVA during the Soviet times.

Just to quote a few lines from one of the most well known such organization, the American Jewish committee or AJC:

“It would be inaccurate to equate today’s Russia with the Soviet Union and to apply approaches similar to those used in dealing with the Soviet Union.

- 1) State-sponsored anti-Semitism in Russia simply does not exist;
- 2) Freedom of immigration is not an issue for the last 20 years;
- 3) With some minor restrictions and state’s support for the Russian Orthodox Church, religion in Russia can be freely exercised;
- 4) While it is true that most of the media, and especially national TV channels, are under state control, some basic elements of freedom of press exist.”

I want to add to it that there are absolutely no restrictions on Internet use, and, moreover, many articles from the Western press, including those highly critical of the Kremlin leadership, are translated into Russian, sometime even with the government grants. Several such sites as www.inosmi.ru; www.inopressa.ru; www.inoforum.ru, and others are visited daily by hundreds of thousands of people who participate in the lovely discussions and expressing sometimes diametrical opinions..

One could continue with the long list of both Russia's achievements and deficiencies during this very short time frame of transition from dictatorship to liberty but I am sure my colleagues in today's hearings will list them extensively, so there is no need to repeat them one more time.

I just want to add that most importantly, modern Russia is not a strategic threat to the U.S. like USSR. It is not an ally in the full sense of this term but it is definitely a strategic partner whom America needs to face the enormous challenges of the 21st Century.

U.S. needs Russian cooperation in many important areas, most urgently in Iranian nuclear program and in a broader issue of nuclear nonproliferation and energy security. There is a need to cooperate in the global fight against terrorism, from which Russia suffers along with the U.S. The U.S. needs Russia's assistance in its efforts in Afghanistan and Middle East. This list goes on and JVA is seen by the Russians as a constant irritant, and as a Cold War relic that undermines Russia's prestige as permanent member of the UN Security Council, as Middle East Quartet Member and in a broader international arena.

Unfortunately, during the late 1990s and throughout the last decade, a new concept emerged that connected JVA to a broader spectrum of political, democratic development, and even economic issues.

For example, such a remote from human rights issue as Russia's purchase of U.S. poultry is often used by some Members of Congress to justify their opposition to the lifting of JVA.

I wonder what Henry Scoop Jackson and Charles Vanik would have to say about this chicken-meat approach to emigration.

I want to stress over and over again that this outdated obstacle to trade engenders resentment in Russia and harms long term U.S. security, economic and diplomatic ties with that country.

To add the salt on the injury Congress has graduated from JVA many other countries of the former Soviet Union where democracy, free market, and human rights are still in question. This is seen by many in Russia, including pro-Western intellectuals, as an example of U.S. applying double standards and a discriminatory approach to their country.

The World Russia Forum which is held every year on Capitol Hill since 1981, and actually is taking place as we speak today is promoting the ideas of U.S. – Russia rapprochement.

This year the Forum occurs exactly on the day of 65th anniversary of an important event in U.S.-Russia history. In the final year of World War II, on April 25, 1945, American and Russian forces (traveling from the West and East, respectively) met each other 75 miles south of Berlin in the small town of Torgau, Germany on the Elbe River. When the troops met, they effectively bifurcated Germany, contributing to the end of the Third Reich. April 25, 2010, marks the 65th anniversary of that historic meeting between the U.S. Army's 69th Infantry Division and Russia's 58th Guards Division, and will be commemorated in an event on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., the day before on Sunday, April 25.

After the great victory over the Nazis in WWII and collapse of Soviet communism, the United States and the whole civilized world are now facing the new unprecedented challenge from international terrorism. Therefore we must build, maintain and expand the strong coalition of nations to address this challenge and to use our joint efforts to defeat the ruthless enemy. At the same time America needs to curtail the spread of the weapons of mass destruction (WMD), seek out the new sources of energy, solve ecological problems, and expand space exploration and nowhere is this more important than in the nexus of bilateral relations between the United States and the Russian Federation.

We keep saying that modern Russia is our friend and partner. So, isn't it true that Russia should therefore be treated differently than the USSR? The public criticism of the Soviet Union was a legitimate part of our ideological confrontation. U.S. government and Congress, Voice of America and Radio Free Europe, numerous human rights organizations did a great job exposing Soviet violations of human rights and speaking on behalf of people who had no voice. As I mentioned earlier, JVA was an important instrument in this ideological warfare.

As one of the "Cold War" warriors and strong proponents of such "interference in the internal affairs" of the Soviet Union, I think I have the moral right and obligation to say that at the present time when Russian people can freely express their opinions, form political parties, publish newspapers and books, travel abroad,

and enjoy many other basic freedoms, things like JVA are no longer justifiable and should be terminated as soon as possible.

In conclusion I'd like to state once again that the integration of Russia with the West is of vital interest to both sides. Many people who say that it is an impossible task are probably from the same school who considered those of us who demanded freedom and democracy in Russia 30 and 20 years ago to be naïve dreamers at best. However, No one can dispute that with all the shortcomings of Russian democracy, we are much better off today than before. The West needs Russia as a strategic security ally and valuable trading partner and no efforts should be spared to achieve this noble goal.

Graduating Russia from JVA is not a charity act for Russia, it's rather is an important step on the road to mutually beneficial U.S. – Russian cooperation.

I thank the Committee of Foreign Affairs for this opportunity to testify today. I would ask the Committee to accept my written statement and would welcome any questions or comments that may be so offered.

Thank you.