Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, it is a

great pleasure for me to participate in this session.

To answer the Committee’s key question, I think yes, there is a

way forward, but only if the other five members of the Six-Party

process can come up with a common position and jointly pressure

North Korea to come back to the table.

I would also add that while it is easy and appropriate to find

fault with both the Bush and the Clinton Administrations’ previous

approaches, we need to keep in mind that the real problem of

course is North Korea’s behavior and policies and not our own.

One thing that the Bush Administration has done correctly is to

insist on a multilateral approach and solution. This is the only realistic

way to proceed.

This does not preclude bilateral dealings with Washington and

Pyongyang, between them and along the sidelines of the—I am

sorry. I am getting a lot of feedback. Am I coming through clearly?

Okay. Thank you. I will proceed.

I think that there is nothing to preclude bilateral dealings between

Washington and Pyongyang, along the sidelines of the Six-

Party Talks, but addressing the problem has to be a regional and

not a bilateral approach.

Seoul was consulted closely during the 1994 Agreed Framework

process, one which I, in fact, supported as the best deal we could

get at the time, but nonetheless felt insulted that it did not have

a seat at the table.

President Clinton was right in 1996 when he promised that in

the future the United States would not enter into any agreement

with North Korea dealing with peace on the peninsula, unless

Seoul was present, and the Bush Administration has wisely stuck

by this policy.

Likewise, Tokyo deserves to be present since Japan falls under

the shadow of Pyongyang’s missiles, and we need to ensure that

Tokyo’s legitimate security concerns are addressed.

China’s continued role is obvious as an honest broker, facilitator

and interlocutor and while Russia brings considerably less to the

table, Moscow’s good insights into North Korea can be helpful and,

along with Beijing, it is necessary to underwrite future security

guarantees.

I think it is essential to continue a multilateral approach and to

make it clear to Pyongyang that we will not cut a separate deal

outside the Six-Party process.

Mr. Chairman, the challenge before us today can be simply stated.

By its actions, North Korea is telling us that it believes that

there are more benefits to be gained by staying away from the

talks and from pursuing a nuclear weapons program, or at least in

leading us to believe that it is pursuing such a program, than there

are consequences.

The pluses outweigh the minuses in their strategic calculation.

Our challenge is to convince them that pursuing nuclear weapons

makes them less, rather than more secure.

If survival is North Korea’s ultimate objective, then we must convince

the North that continuing down its currently chosen path—

regardless of whether this is being done for tactical or strategic

reasons, to acquire bargaining chips, or as an insurance policy—is

hazardous to the regime’s health.

Pyongyang has to believe that the potential consequences, not

just military but economic and political, outweigh the perceived

benefits. And the U.S. cannot do this alone.

Our primary instrument of persuasion is military. This has only

limited utility. Many have argued that if the United States was not

so overextended in Iraq and Afghanistan, Pyongyang might be

more responsive and they are probably right, but we are overextended

and even if we were not, marching on Pyongyang is not

a realistic option.

The Administration has been right in stressing that regime

change is not the goal. Individuals who infer otherwise, I believe,

make diplomacy more difficult.

Let me add as an aside that private diplomatic efforts, regardless

of how well intended, normally do more harm than good.

Publicly announcing that Pyongyang expected President Bush to

include conciliatory statements in his State of the Union address

helped to ensure that this would not happen. Leading Pyongyang

to believe that it might created unhelpful illusions and more importantly

provided a vehicle for subsequently blaming Washington for

the continued stalemate, and this serves to further negate our political

leverage.

One final word on our military leverage. Note that I said the

military option had ‘‘limited’’ utility, not ‘‘no’’ utility. Part of the

way forward, as has been mentioned by other Members, is to continue

to expand the proliferation security initiative to ensure that

whatever nuclear capability that may exist in North Korea stays in

North Korea.

While publicly pronouncing red lines is probably counterproductive,

one hopes that Pyongyang understands that exploiting

nuclear weapons or fissile material will result in serious consequences.

This message needs to be delivered most clearly by Beijing and

by Moscow. Washington’s political and economic leverage is limited.

We do possess important positive incentives, but are right not to

offer these prematurely.

At the end of the day, we will likely wind up rewarding North

Korea’s bad behavior, but we should not be paying in advance.

Today we have little left to withhold so we must look to Beijing,

Seoul, and others to waive their much more influential political

and economic sticks.

I agree with those Members that have said that Beijing can and

should do more. Its efforts to appear evenhanded are becoming increasingly

counterproductive.

I believe the country with the greatest degree of unused leverage

is South Korea. This is not only leverage over North Korea, but

also leverage over China. Since the historic 2000 North/South Summit,

North Korea has become increasingly dependent on Seoul.

President Roh has consistently argued that the ROK would not tolerate

nuclear weapons in the North, that Pyongyang could either

go down the road to political and economic cooperation and reap

those benefits, or it could choose to pursue nuclear weapons and

face political and economic consequences.

It was not either/or. The North could not have it both ways, or

at least that is what President Roh has claimed. If he is serious,

I think at a minimum it is up to South Korea now to announce that

it is temporarily suspending its participation, to use the North Korean

phrase, in the economic assistance programs with North

Korea until Pyongyang provides a satisfactory explanation regarding

its declared nuclear capabilities and attentions.

The next step would be for Beijing, ideally at Seoul’s request, to

call in an emergency plan or recession of the Six-Party Talks, inviting

Pyongyang to attend, but making it clear that the meeting will

occur regardless.

Mr. Chairman, North Korea has played an effective divide and

conquer game throughout the nuclear standoff. If it receives conflicting

signals in the face of this latest provocation, it will be encouraged

to continue this tactic.

The time has come for the other five to finally speak with one

voice to Pyongyang to hold it accountable for its words and actions,

and it is time for South Korea to play a more assertive, constructive

role.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cossa follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. RALPH COSSA, PRESIDENT, PACIFIC FORUM CSIS

Chairman Leach, members of the subcommittee, colleagues:

It is a great pleasure for me to participate in this important session on the North

Korean nuclear challenge. To answer the Committee’s key question: Yes, there is

‘‘a way forward,’’ but only if the other five members of the six-party process—the

U.S., ROK, Japan, China, and Russia—can craft a common position and jointly pressure

North Korea to stop playing its dangerous game of ‘‘divide and conquer’’ and

finally come to the negotiating table.

Let me say at the onset that there are no simple or ready solutions to this crisis.

In analyzing how we got to where we are today, there is also plenty of blame to

go around—all the parties have made mistakes and followed paths or policies that

have proven counterproductive. My remarks this morning will include some criticism

of past actions by Washington, Seoul, Beijing, and others. It is easy, and appropriate,

to find fault with both the Clinton and Bush administrations’ approaches.

But we cannot lose sight of the simple fact that the problem, at its core, lies in

North Korea’s behavior and policies, not our own. Had Pyongyang chosen to honor

the Agreed Framework that it had negotiated with the Clinton Administration—an

agreement that I have always supported, not as ideal but as the best deal we could

have reasonably expected at the time and one that could have served the broader

interests of peace on the Peninsula, had Pyongyang chosen to honor it—we would

not be facing the challenges we are dealing with today. North Korean behavior lies

at the root of the problem and we cannot lose sight of this fact, even as we second

guess our own approaches to dealing with Pyongyang.

As we look toward the future, it is important not to overreact, but it is likewise

important not to fail to react. I believe Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice’s initial

response to Pyongyang’s surprise announcement that it was ‘‘suspending its participation’’

in the Six-Party Talks and that it had ‘‘manufactured nucs’’ was exactly

right. As you will recall, she said:‘‘I think we just have to first look at the statement

and then we need to talk with our allies.’’

One thing that the Bush administration has done, and continues to do right, from

the Oct 2002 onset of the current crisis until today, is to insist on a multilateral

approach and solution; this is the only realistic way to proceed. This does not mean

that there should not be bilateral dealings between Washington and Pyongyang

along the sidelines of the Six-Party Talks—there should and, indeed, have been—

but addressing the North Korean security challenge, in all its dimensions, is a regional,

not just a bilateral problem.

While Seoul was closely consulted during the Agreed Framework process, South

Koreans were nonetheless insulted that they did not have a seat at the table in

1994 when it was their lives, much more than American lives, that were directly

under the gun. President Clinton was right, in 1996, when he pledged in Cheju-do

that, in the future, the U.S. would not enter into any agreement with North Korea

dealing with peace on the Peninsula that excluded the ROK. The Bush administration

has wisely stuck by this policy and ROK President Roh Moo-hyun, since the

day of his inauguration, has made it clear that South Korea wants to play—indeed,

insists upon playing—a key role, as well it should. Frankly speaking, I have been

disappointed with Seoul’s performance while at the table. (I have laid out some of

the reasons why in a recent Pacific Forum PacNet article which I believe has been

provided for the record, and upon which I will expand shortly.) But, I firmly believe

that Seoul must be an equal partner in the process and must be an active participant

in the deliberations.

Likewise, Tokyo deserves to be present, since Japan also falls under the shadow

of Pyongyang’s missiles and suspected nuclear (as well as conventional, chemical,

and suspected biological) weapons. The good news over the past two years is that

Washington and Tokyo have been virtually in lock-step on this and many other important

security issues and we need to ensure that Tokyo’s legitimate security concerns

are addressed in crafting a final solution to the current crisis. Another lesson

learned in 1994 was that, if we expect an ally to help foot the bill, they ought to

also have a say in crafting the agreement. This provides added rationale for continuing

to include Tokyo in the Talks.

China has played, and must continue to play, a constructive role as an honest

broker, facilitator, and interlocutor with Pyongyang. While Beijing’s leverage over

Pyongyang is clearly less than absolute, China has more clout than it has chosen

to use—or has used only selectively and too infrequently—in the past.

Frankly speaking, Russia brings considerably less to the table but can potentially

play a constructive role, since Moscow has long had good access and good insights

into North Korean thinking and behavior and can help to reinforce messages today

and, along with Beijing, help underwrite security guarantees in the future.

So, I think it is essential as we try to figure out how best to proceed, that we

continue with a multilateral approach and make it clear to Pyongyang, as the Bush

administration has once again done, that there will not be a separate deal or a bilateral

track outside of the Six-Party process. To do otherwise is to insult our Korean

and Japanese allies and deny ourselves the leverage and potential security contributions

that Beijing and Moscow are uniquely capable of providing if and when we

ever craft a workable solution to the current stand-off.

Mr. Chairman, the challenge before us today can be simply stated. By its actions,

North Korea is telling us quite clearly that it believes that there are more benefits

to be gained from staying away from the talks and from pursuing a nuclear weapons

program—or at least in leading us to believe that it is pursuing such a program—

than there are consequences; the pluses outweigh the minuses, in their strategic calculus.

I understand why the Bush administration and especially South Korea have attempted

to downplay Pyongyang’s assertion that it has ‘‘manufactured nukes’’ as

nothing new. Nonetheless, it would be wrong to disregard this latest pronouncement

as mere rhetoric. Pyongyang has taken a significant step out of the nuclear closet.

Those still in denial may argue that Pyongyang is bluffing; that there is no more

reason to believe Pyongyang’s claim of possessing nuclear weapons than there was

to believe previous assertions that it did not have them. But it seems foolish, and

foolhardy, to ignore the intended message , or to fail to hold Pyongyang accountable

for its own actions and assertions.

The challenge for the other five members of the six-party process, individually and

collectively, is to convince Pyongyang that pursuing nuclear weapons and boycotting

the talks makes it *less* rather than *more* secure; that the potential consequences outweigh

the perceived gains. If regime and national survival is North Korea’s ultimate

objective—and this is one of the few things that virtually all North Korea ‘‘experts’’

(a term I use advisedly) agree upon—then we must convince the North that continuing

down its currently chosen path—regardless of whether this is being done for

tactical or strategic reasons, to acquire bargaining chips, or as an insurance policy—

is hazardous to the North Korean regime’s health. Pyongyang has to believe that

the potential consequences—not just military, but political and economic—outweigh

the perceived benefits; this is the only way we can persuade Pyongyang to change

its behavior and current course of action.

The U.S. cannot do this alone. Our primary instrument of persuasion is military

and this has only limited utility. Many have argued that if the U.S. was not so overextended

in Iraq and Afghanistan, Pyongyang might be more responsive . . . and

they are probably right. But we are overextended and, even if we were not, marching

on Pyongyang is not a realistic option, given the stakes involved.

Regime change a la Iraq is not an option under the current circumstances and

the administration has been right in stressing that regime change is not the goal,

as much as we would all like to see Kim Jong-il go away. Individuals, including

some inside the administration and inside the Congress, who infer otherwise, make

diplomacy more difficult. They also hurt Washington’s credibility with allies such as

South Korea, whose cooperation is essential to finding a peaceful solution to the

problem.

Let me add as an aside that private diplomatic efforts, whether by academics, congressional

delegations, or others, however well-intended, normally do more harm

than good. Publicly announcing that Pyongyang expected President Bush to include

conciliatory statements about North Korea in his State of the Union address helped

ensure that this would not happen. Leading Pyongyang to believe that it might created

unhelpful illusions and, more importantly, provided a vehicle for subsequently

blaming Washington rather than Pyongyang for the continued stalemate. This

serves to further negate our political leverage.

One final word regarding our military leverage: please note that I said that the

military option had *limited*, as opposed to *no*, utility. Part of the ‘‘way forward,’’ in

my view, is to continue to expand—and continually demonstrate the effectiveness

of—the Proliferation Security Initiative and other multilateral military efforts to ensure

that whatever nuclear capability that may exist in North Korea stays in North

Korea. This includes implementing, if not strengthening international protocols such

as UNSC Resolution 1540. While publicly pronouncing ‘‘red lines’’ is probably counterproductive,

one would hope that the other five participants have made it clear

to Pyongyang, individually if not collectively, that exporting nuclear weapons or

fissile material will result in serious consequences to include, at a minimum, UNSCapproved

international sanctions. If not, they certainly should. This message needs

to be delivered most clearly by Beijing and Moscow since they have thus far kept

the North Korea nuclear crisis off the UNSC agenda.

As another aside, let me say that it is beyond my comprehension why the Bush

administration has been so non-supportive of IAEA Director General Dr. Mohamed

ElBaradei—his comments regarding North Korea and regarding other non-proliferation

efforts such as closing the current ‘‘loopholes’’ in the NPT have not only been

right on the mark, they have been completely consistent with and supportive of

Bush administration policies. We should be figuring out how to work more closely

with him and take advantage of his credible voice on this issue, rather than trying

to block his renewal.

Washington’s political and economic leverage is also limited. We do possess important

positive incentives or rewards but are right not to offer these prematurely

(even if we could be more forthcoming in indicating what they might be). At the end

of the day, administration assertions notwithstanding, we will likely wind up rewarding

North Korea’s bad behavior . . . but we should not be paying in advance.

Today, we have little left to withhold, so we must look to Beijing, Seoul, and the

others to wave their much more influential political and economic sticks.

Most eyes have shifted toward Beijing, which has acted as an ‘‘honest broker’’ for

the six-way dialogue. The PRC has continually urged patience while openly questioning

Washington’s assertions about Pyongyang’s nuclear capabilities and intentions.

While Beijing continues to argue that it has no control over its erstwhile

neighbor, its political and economic leverage over Pyongyang clearly exceeds Washington’s.

Beijing can and should do more. Its efforts to appear ‘‘even-handed,’’ while

perhaps understandable from a Chinese point of view, are becoming increasingly

counterproductive. I would argue that since last June, and certainly since

Pyongyang’s Feb 11 nuclear pronouncement, Chinese calls for ‘‘both sides to be flexible’’

increasingly miss the point. The diplomatic prowess of President Hu Jintao and

China’s ‘‘fourth generation’’ leadership will now be put to its most severe test.

But, as I argued in my submitted article, the country with the greatest degree

of largely unused and untested leverage over North Korea is not the U.S. or China,

but South Korea. To give credit where credit is due, this is largely a result of former

President Kim Dae-jung’s ‘‘Sunshine Policy’’ of economic engagement with the North

(maintained through the current administration’s ‘‘Policy of Peace and Prosperity’’).

Since the historic 2000 North-South summit, North Korea has become increasingly

dependent on Seoul economically, while its (increasingly tentative) political acceptability

internationally also has its roots in Seoul’s continued encouragement to others

to likewise engage the North.

(I should add that Seoul also has considerable leverage with Beijing, which understands

that in the long run, it is Seoul, not Pyongyang, that will prevail on the Peninsula.

As a result, Beijing has been more responsive to Seoul’s needs and requests

than to Washington’s. Conversely, Washington needs to avoid reinforcing the view—

that already exists among many in South Korea—that Beijing is the solution and

that Washington is part of the problem; this hardly serves America’s long-term strategic

interest on the Peninsula.)

President Roh has consistently argued, since his inauguration, that the ROK

‘‘would not tolerate’’ nuclear weapons in the North. Pyongyang, Roh asserted, could

either go down the path of political and economic cooperation with the South and

reap the considerable rewards inherent in this choice or it could choose to pursue

nuclear weapons and face political and economic isolation from Seoul and the rest

of the international community. It was an ‘‘either-or’’ choice; North Korea could not

have it both ways . . . or can it? However else you choose to interpret the North’s

latest statement, it clearly is calling Seoul’s hand on this issue.

If President Roh is serious about not tolerating a nuclear North Korea, at an absolute

minimum he should immediately announce that South Korea is temporarily

‘‘suspending its participation’’ in all economic cooperation and assistance programs

with North Korea, including in their joint development zone, until Pyongyang provides

a satisfactory explanation to Seoul, and to the other dialogue partners, regarding

its declared nuclear capabilities and intentions. Others (especially in Washington

and Tokyo) are likely to call for more drastic measures, including immediate

economic sanctions against the North, but this could be a step too far (at least initially).

It also puts others in the driver’s seat that President Roh has long aspired

to occupy. The other six-party participants should support this action and announce

that they are taking (or at least considering) similar steps. But the measure will

be most meaningful (and can only truly be effective) if it is initiated by Seoul.

The next step would be for Beijing, ideally at Seoul’s request, to call an emergency

plenary session of the six-party talks, inviting Pyongyang to attend and provide further

explanation of its current stance, but making it clear that the meeting will proceed

regardless of whether or not the North participates.

North Korea has effectively played a ‘‘divide and conquer’’ game throughout the

nuclear stand-off. If it receives conflicting signals from Washington, Seoul, Beijing,

Tokyo, and Moscow in the face of this latest provocation, it will be encouraged to

continue this tactic. The time has come for the other five finally to begin speaking

with one voice to Pyongyang, to hold it accountable for its own words and actions.

It’s also time for Seoul, along with Beijing, to play a more assertive, constructive

role.

If this problem cannot be handled within the six-party context, then the only alternatives

are collective action through the United Nations Security Council—the

desired alternative but one that Beijing, Seoul, and Moscow previously believed to

be ‘‘premature’’—or unilateral actions that will likely only make matters worse.

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*and International Studies in Washington and senior editor of Comparative Connections,*

*a quarterly electronic journal [www.csis.org/pacfor]. The opinions expressed*

*are exclusively his own.*

I would like to comment just very briefly on the comments

that have been made. First of all, I would say while we

could debate whether or not the Iraq model worked or will work

in Iraq, I think it is very clear that one size does not fit all and

that we ought to learn from mistakes and learn from the Iraq experience

and not try to repeat it on the Korean Peninsula. It is certainly

a completely different scenario and I think the Administration

is wise to make the distinction between the two.

I also, to perhaps further explain my earlier comments, I think

the North Koreans clearly believe that today their tactics are serving

their interests and we need to convince them otherwise.

My point was that the military instrument alone is not effective,

because we have very limited options. So we have to put more political

and economic pressure on North Korea, and that pressure

can most effectively be done by South Korea and by China, and

South Korea has a lot of influence over the North if they choose

to use it.

They also have a lot of influence over China, because at the end

of the day, China understands that the real prize is South Korea,

not North Korea, and they want to have a situation where South

Koreans believe that the United States is part of the problem and

China is part of the solution. That, I don’t believe serves our national

interest and, therefore, I think we need to be more proactive.

I would argue in response to your comments about thinking out

of the box, et cetera, I think outreach programs are central. They

are very good to help open up North Korea.

This was part of the point of the Sunshine Policy. Part of the

brilliance, if you will, of the Sunshine Policy, but I think we have

to understand that when it comes to serious negotiations, if we

were to agree to a separate channel, a bilateral channel, the North

Koreans would immediately and conclusively ignore the Six-Party

process.

Therefore, the only way we should do bilateral serious negotiations

is within the context of the Six-Party process, in side meetings.

I think we were wrong to delay doing that for way too long, but

the point is, as Jon and others have pointed out, the Administration

now appears willing and, in fact, has demonstrated a willingness

to have bilateral sessions within the multilateral context and

we have to insist that that is the only way that we can move forward.

Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would agree with much

of what Bob Sutter has said and particularly what he said earlier,

which is while it may not be very satisfying, really, more of the

same policy is probably the best approach.

We need to coordinate more. We need to be more flexible, but we

need to keep things within the context of the Six-Party Talks.

We need to use more economic and political diplomacy, as Nick

said, but we have to recognize that most of this comes from Beijing

and Seoul. They can do it much more effectively.

Jon pointed out that we had not gone to the U.N. Security Council.

That is not because of lack of trying on the United States’ part.

China and Russia have blocked that. I think they need to reassess

that position.

The most important thing from Washington’s standpoint is we

need to get our own act together. There has been much division

within the Administration between the so-called hawks and the

engagers and we need to be sending a consistent message to North

Korea.

One, that we are prepared to talk, but only within the context

of the Six-Party Talks and then we need the other members, in

particular Seoul and Beijing, to reinforce that message and to use

some of the leverages they have. Thank you.