Mr. Chairman, Members of Congress, it is always

an honor to be invited to the International Relations Committee

and it is a pleasure to be here today.

The most surprising part of last week’s momentous development

with North Korea, I think, was that North Korea’s bold move was

so widely regarded as genuinely unexpected, both in Washington

and abroad.

The North Korean Government did not opt to join the world’s nuclear

weapons club suddenly on a bizarre and inexplicable whim.

To the contrary, last week’s announcement represents the entirely

predictable culmination of decades of steady, deliberate effort and

careful, methodical progress on a multifaceted program of weapons

of mass destruction, a program that includes work not only on nuclear

weapons, but also on chemical weapons, biological weapons,

and long-range ballistic missiles.

The WMD program is propelled not by irrational impulses, but

rather by a carefully considered strategy, a strategy so deeply wedded

to purposes of state that it can be described as integrally fused

into the very logic of the North Korean system.

VerDate Mar 21 2002 11:49 Nov 08, 2005 Jkt 000000 PO 00000 Frm 00022 Fmt 6633 Sfmt 6601 F:\WORK\AP\021705\98813.000 HINTREL1 PsN: SHIRL

17

That strategy and the logic that undergirds it may be intuitively

unfamiliar to those of us with a modern globalization sensibility,

but unless and until we appreciate the thinking that animates

North Korea’s WMD quest, we will face the prospect of ever more

unpleasant and expensive surprises from Pyongyang.

In a very real sense, the DPRK is a state unlike any other state

on the face of the earth. It is a political construct, specially and

particularly built for three intertwined purposes: To conduct a war,

to settle a historic grievance, and to fulfill a grand ideological vision.

That vision is the reunification of the now divided Korean Peninsula

under the unfettered independent socialist rule of the

Pyongyang regime. In other words, unconditional annexation of the

present day South Korea and liquidation of the Government of the

ROK.

The grievance is the failure of the famous 1950 surprise attack

against South Korea, an assault that might well have unified all

of Korea on Pyongyang’s terms, but for America’s unexpected military

intervention.

In that telling, only America’s continuing support has permitted

an otherwise rotten, unstable and utterly irredeemable ROK Government

to survive since 1950.

Although we are sometimes inattentive to it, the historical fact

is that the Korean Wars’ battles were only halted through a

ceasefire agreement. There has never been a peace treaty bringing

the hostilities to a formal and conclusive end.

The Korean War is, from the DPRK’s standpoint, an ongoing

war. The North Korean leadership is committed to an eventual, unconditional

victory in that war, however long it may take, however

much it may cost.

Despite the ingenuity and bravery of North Korea’s army, officers,

and soldiers, its forces cannot hope to prevail over the combined

U.S.-ROK alliance that awaits them on the other side of the

DMZ.

Thus, the neutralization and effective removal of the United

States and the United States alliance system from the Korean

equation remains utterly essential from Pyongyang’s perspective.

That objective, however, cannot be achieved by the DPRK’s conventional

capabilities. To deter, coerce and punish the United

States, the DPRK must possess nuclear weaponry and ballistic missiles

capable of delivering these into the heart of the American

enemy.

This central strategic fact explains why North Korea has been

assiduously pursuing its nuclear development and missiles program

for over 30 years, at terrible expense to its people’s livelihood

and despite all adverse repercussions to its international relations.

Several important implications flow from the DPRK’s conception

of and strategy for its WMD program. First, continuing and escalating

international tensions are not accidental and unwelcome side

effects of the program. They are instead central to its purpose.

Second, WMD threats and especially nuclear and missile threats

have already been used by North Korea with great success, as an

instrument for extracting international extortion payments from

the United States and its allies and as a lever for forcing the

United States to engage Pyongyang diplomatically on Pyongyang’s

own terms.

The greatest potential dividends for North Korea in nuclear and

ballistic diplomacy, however, still lie in store and that brings us to

a third point.

For half a century and more, U.S. security policy has been

charged with imposing deterrence upon Pyongyang. Shouldn’t we

expect that Pyongyang has also been thinking about how to deter

the U.S. over those same long decades?

Nuclear weapons and especially long-range nuclear missiles

might well answer the deterrence question for the North Korean

State, as former Secretary of Defense William Perry incisively recognized.

Faced with the risk of nuclear attack on the United States mainland,

he warned, Washington might hesitate in a time of crisis on

the Korean Peninsula, but if Washington’s security commitment to

the ROK were not credible in a crisis, the military alliance would

be hollow, vulnerable to collapse under the weight of its own internal

contradictions.

North Korea’s WMD program in short may be the regime’s best

hope for achieving its long cherished objectives of breaking the

U.S.-ROK military alliance and forcing United States troops out of

the Korean Peninsula.

Fourth, those who hope for a win-win solution to the North Korean

nuclear impasse must recognize the plain fact that Pyongyang

has never engaged in win-win bargaining. Pyongyang believes in

win-lose solutions, preferring outcomes that entail not only DPRK

victories, but also face-losing setbacks for its opponents. From the

DPRK’s perspective, win-win solutions are not only impractical,

they are immoral.

Finally, those who believe that a peaceful and voluntary

denuclearization of the DPRK is still possible through yet further

rounds of international conference diplomacy or through some future

negotiating breakthrough must be ready to consider what such

an outcome would look like from North Korea today. That is to say:

From the standpoint of the real existing North Korean Government,

not some imaginary DPRK we would rather be talking to.

No matter how large the payoff package, no matter how broad

and comprehensive the attendant international formula for recognition

and security, the Western desideratum of CVID (complete

verifiable, irreversible denuclearization), would irrevocably consign

North Korea to a world in which it is the metrics of peaceful competition

that matter and thus irrevocably to a role in international

affairs for the DPRK more in consonance with the size of its GNP.

No North Korean leader is likely to regard such a proposal as a

bargain.

The unsettling thrust of this analysis, if it is correct, is not just

that North Korea’s leadership today may positively prefer a strategy

that augments WMD capabilities, it may also positively fear a

strategy that does anything less.

To conclude, the task now before us is to make the world safe

from North Korea. Kim Jong Il, by contrast, is doing his best to

make the world safe for North Korea.

1 Parts of this testimony draw upon the author’s contributions to a recent study by the National

Institute for Public Policy (NIPP) on the North Korean challenge to US missile defense.

Thanks go to NIPP’s Dr. Keith A. Payne and Amb. David J. Smith for supporting and encouraging

my research in that effort.

Making the world safe from North Korea promises to be a difficult,

expensive and dangerous undertaking for America and our

allies. However, the costs and dangers of making the world safe for

North Korea stand to be incalculably higher. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Eberstadt follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NICHOLAS EBERSTADT, PH.D., HENRY WENDT SCHOLAR IN

POLITICAL ECONOMY, AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE

Last week’s declaration by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK, aka

North Korea) that Pyongyang possessed nuclear weapons, and would hold on to its

nuclear arsenal ‘‘under any circumstances’’, was greeted with shock and astonishment

around the world. The most surprising part of last week’s momentous development,

however, was that North Korea’s bold move was so widely regarded as genuinely

unexpected, both in Washington and abroad.

The North Korean government did not opt to join the world’s nuclear weapons

club suddenly, on a bizarre and inexplicable whim. To the contrary: last week’s announcement

represents the entirely predictable culmination of decades of steady, deliberate

effort and careful, methodical progress on a multifaceted program of weapons

of mass destruction (WMD)—a program that includes work not only on nuclear

weapons, but also on chemical weapons, biological weapons, and ballistic missiles.

This WMD program is propelled not by irrational impulses, but rather by a carefully

considered strategy—a strategy so deeply wedded to purposes of state that can

be described as integrally fused into the very logic of the North Korean system.1

That strategy, and the logic that undergirds it, may be intuitively unfamiliar to

those of us with modern, ‘‘globalization era’’ sensibilities. But unless and until we

appreciate we appreciate the thinking that animates North Korea’s WMD quest, we

will face the prospect of ever more unpleasant and expensive surprises from

Pyongyang.

In a very real sense, the DPRK is a state unlike any other on the face of the earth

today. It is a political construct specially and particularly built for three entwined

purposes: to conduct a war, to settle a historical grievance, and to fulfill a grand

ideological vision.

That *vision* is the reunification of the now-divided Korean peninsula under the

unfettered ‘‘independent, socialist’’ rule of the Pyongyang regime—in other words,

unconditional annexation of present-day South Korea and liquidation of the government

of the Republic of Korea (ROK) so that Kim Jong Il & Co. might exercise total

command over the entire Korean race (*minjok* in Korean).

If that vision sounds preposterous and utterly impracticable to us, please understand

that it looks very different from Pyongyang. North Korean statecraft has been

predicated on that very vision for over half a century. To this day, ‘‘Sunshine Policy’’

and all the rest notwithstanding, Pyongyang grants diplomatic status to only one

‘‘government mission ‘‘ from Seoul: this being the legation of the so-called ‘‘South

Korean National Democratic Front (SKNDF)’’, an invented resistance group supposedly

based in the South, which regularly uses North Korean airwaves to denounce

the Republic of Korea as an illegitimate colonial police state.

The *grievance* is the failure of the famous June 1950 surprise attack against

South Korea—an assault that might well have unified all Korea on Pyongyang’s

terms but for America’s unexpected military intervention in defense of the ROK. In

Pyongyang’s telling, it is only America’s continuing and malign imperialistic support

that has permitted an otherwise rotten, unstable and utterly irredeemable ROK

government to survive since 1950 (and more recently, to take on the trappings of

prosperity and democratization).

The total-mobilization war state that Pyongyang has painfully erected over the

decades (at among other costs, the North Korean famine of the 1990s) is a response

to this grievance, and an instrument for fulfilling this vision. And the *war* that

North Korea has prepared for is not some future theoretical contingency. Quite the

contrary: in the view of North Korean leaders, their country is at war today, here

and now.

Although we ourselves are sometimes inattentive to it, the fact of the matter is

that the Korean War’s battles were only halted through a cease-fire agreement (the

Armistice of 1953)—there has never been a peace treaty bringing the hostilities to

2 There is no indication, incidentally, that North Korean decision-makers view WMD as ‘‘special

weapons’’, to be held in reserve—on the contrary, missiles and nuclear devices seem to figure

integrally in North Korean official thinking and are *already* being used on a regular basis

in North Korean statecraft, as the government’s ongoing foray’s in ‘‘blackmail diplomacy’’ attest.

And despite Pyongyang’s emphasis of race doctrine, there is no indication whatsoever that North

Korean leadership would hesitate to use such weapons on *minjok*—race brothers—in South

Korea. Pyongyang did not blink at starving perhaps one million of its *own* people for reasons

of state in the 1990s. It regards the South Korean state as a cancerous monstrosity, and those

who support it as corrupt and worthless national traitors.

3 Despite the North Korean regime’s seemingly freakish face to the world, North Korean leadership’s

capabilities for making subtle and skillful calculations is underscored by the bottom line

in its negotiations with the United States government over the past decade. Between 1995 and

2004, by calculations of the Congressional Research Service, Pyongyang secured more than $1

billion in foreign aid from the US—a state the DPRK regards as its prime international enemy.

a formal and conclusive end. The Korean War is, from the DPRK’s standpoint, an

*ongoing* war—and North Korea’s leadership is committed to an eventual, unconditional

victory in that war, however long that may take, however much that may

cost.

Against all odds, North Korean leadership still attempts to support a vast conventional

military force—long rehearsed for an anticipated reprise of June 1950—on a

dysfunctional and failing Soviet-type economy. Despite the ingenuity and bravery of

North Korean People’s Army officers and soldiers, this force cannot hope to prevail

over the combined ROK–US alliance that awaits them on the other side of the DMZ.

Thus the neutralization, and effective removal, of the United States and the US alliance

system from the Korean equation is utterly essential from Pyongyang’s perspective.

That objective, however, cannot be achieved by the DPRK’s conventional capabilities—

today or in any foreseeable future. To deter, coerce, and punish the United

States, the DPRK must possess nuclear weaponry and the ballistic missiles capable

of delivering these into the heart of the American enemy. This central strategic fact

explains why North Korea has been assiduously pursuing its nuclear development

and missile development programs for over thirty years—at terrible expense to its

people’s livelihood, and despite all adverse repercussions on its international relations.

Although Pyongyang rails against ‘‘globalization’’ in other contexts, North Korea’s

own conception of the uses of WMD are fully ‘‘globalized’’. Thanks largely (though

not exclusively) to its short-range ‘‘SCUD’’-style missiles and bio-chemical weapons,

primarily targeted on South Korea, Pyongyang can always remind counterparts in

the Blue House that the enormous metropolis of Seoul is a hostage to fate, to be

destroyed at a moment on Kim Jong Il’s say-so. Intermediate No ‘‘Dong type’’ missiles

capable of striking Japan (and American bases in Japan) with nuclear warheads

put Japanese political leaders on permanent warning of the possible costs of

incurring North Korea’s anger, and the potential dangers of siding with the United

States in any time of Peninsular crisis. Finally, long-range missiles of the improved

‘‘Taepo Dong’’ variety may be capable of striking the United States mainland, now

or in the relatively near future.2

Several important implications flow from the DPRK’s conception of, and strategy

for, its WMD program.

First, continuing and escalating international tensions are not the accidental and

unwelcome side-effects of the program: they are instead its central purpose. Simply

stated, the DPRK’s growing WMD arsenal, and the threats it permits the North Korean

regime to pose to other governments, are the key to the political and economic

prizes Pyongyang intends to extract from an otherwise hostile and unwilling world.

Second, WMD threats—and especially nuclear and missile threats—have *already*

been used by North Korea with great success: as an instrument for extracting *de*

*facto* international extortion payments from the United States ands its allies, and

as a lever of forcing the United States to ‘‘engage’’ Pyongyang diplomatically, and

on Pyongyang’s own terms.3

The greatest potential dividends for North Korean nuclear and ballistic diplomacy,

however, still lie in store—and this bring us to a third point. For half a century

and more US security policy has been charged with imposing ‘‘deterrence’’ upon

Pyongyang. Shouldn’t we expect that Pyongyang has also been thinking about how

to ‘‘deter’’ the US over those same long decades?

Nuclear weapons (especially long-range nuclear missiles) might well answer the

‘‘deterrence question’’ for the North Korean state, as former Secretary of Defense

William J. Perry incisively recognized in his 1999 ‘‘Perry Process’’ report: faced with

the risk of nuclear attack on the US mainland, he warned, Washington might hesitate

at a time of crisis in the Korean peninsula. But if Washington’s security com-

mitment to the ROK were not credible in a crisis, the military alliance would be

hollow: and vulnerable to collapse under the weight of its own internal contradictions.

North Korea’s WMD program, in short, may be the regime’s best hope for

achieving its long-cherished objectives of breaking the US–ROK military alliance,

and forcing American troops out of the Korean peninsula.

Fourth, those who hope for a ‘‘win-win’’ solution to the North Korean nuclear impasse

must recognize the plain fact that Pyongyang does not now engage in ‘‘winwin’’

bargaining, and never has. The historical record is completely clear: Pyongyang

believes in ‘‘zero-sum’’ solutions, preferring outcomes that entail not only DPRK victories,

but also face-losing setbacks for its opponents. From the DPRK’s perspective,

‘‘win-win’’ solutions are not only impractical—they leave adversaries unnecessarily

strong—but actually immoral.

Finally, those who believe that a peaceful and voluntary de-nuclearization of the

DPRK is still possible through yet further rounds of international conference diplomacy’’,

or through some future ‘‘negotiating breakthrough’’, must be ready to consider

what such an outcome would look from North Korea today—that is to say,

from the standpoint of the real existing North Korean state, not some imaginary

DPRK we’d rather be talking to.

No matter how large the pay-off package, no matter how broad and comprehensive

the attendant international formula for recognition and security, the Western

desideratum of ‘‘complete verifiable irreversible denuclearization’’ (CVID) would irrevocably

consign North Korea to a world in which it is the metrics of peaceful

international competition that matter—and thus irrevocably to a role in international

affairs for the DPRK more in consonance with the size of its GNP. No

North Korean leader is likely to mistake such a proposal for a bargain.

Even worse from Pyongyang’s standpoint: a genuine agreement to denuclearize

might well threaten to undermine the authority and legitimacy of the North Korean

state. Since its founding in 1948, the DPRK has demanded terrible and continuing

sacrifices from its population—but it has always justified these in the name of its

historic vision for reunifying the Korean race. Today, however, forswearing its WMD

options would be tantamount to forswearing the claim to unify the Korean peninsula

on Pyongyang’s own terms. Shorn of its legitimating vision, what then, exactly,

would be the rationale for absolutist North Korean rule?

The unsettling thrust of this analysis is not just that North Korean leadership

today may positively prefer a strategy that augments the government’s WMD capabilities:

it may also positively fear a strategy that does anything less.

To conclude: the task now before us is to make the world safe *from North Korea*.

Kim Jong Il, by contrast, is doing his best to make the world safe *for North Korea*.

Making the world safe *from* North Korea promises to be a difficult, expensive, and

dangerous undertaking . For America and her allies, however, the costs and dangers

of making the world safe *for* North Korea stand to be incalculably higher.

Yes, sir.

Absolutely. Yes.

Yes, sir. As you quite correctly indicated, there

is no trust on either side in Pyongyang and Washington’s dealings

with each other.

They have a zero sum negotiation going on. Under those circumstances,

I suppose the best we can hope for, at least at the beginning,

is some respect, avoiding big misunderstandings between

the two sides to understand very clearly where each side is coming

from and what the objectives of the two sides happen to be.

One of the unfortunate aspects of United States diplomacy with

the DPRK is that we don’t always listen to what they say. Sometimes

you can actually learn from what people say; sometimes people

even mean what they say.

North Korean leadership revealed some very interesting objectives

in the highest level visit the DPRK has yet enjoyed with the

United States. That was during the Clinton Administration when

Vice Chairman Jo Myong Rok came to the United States, to the

State Department, to meet at the White House with the President.

At the State Department dinner, Vice Chairman General Jo gave

a toast, and I won’t get the words perfectly right, but I will try to

get the essence of them.

Jo said he had been instructed by Chairman Kim Jong Il to tell

Washington that we could move from hostility to friendship and

from confrontation to cooperation, as soon as the United States was

prepared to provide guarantees for the DPRK’s territorial integrity

and its national sovereignty.

Nobody seemed to listen to what he said at that dinner. I happened

to be there: I looked around to see if anybody was paying

attention, but everybody seemed to be caught up in the bon.

Those were striking words, striking especially if we ask what the

North Korean Government means by the ‘‘territorial integrity of

the DPRK.’’

We could start by looking at the North Korean Constitution.

What does the North Korean Constitution say the territory of the

DPRK is? That is the whole thing.

This was a very bold opening bid. If these are the terms on which

we have to become friends, it would be a very expensive friendship.

Congressman, I am only a newspaper reader

about Iran, but I concur with everything that Jon has just said.

One of the points I suppose I would offer is that one of the

asymmetries in the North Korean nuclear drama is that the United

States is the only truly global actor involved. The precedents that

we establish in our nuclear dealings with the DPRK will have consequences

that are much more likely to be direct for us in other

parts of the world.

Of course the Tehran leadership is reading the newspapers and

surfing the Web and trying to understand what the consequence for

them of our approach in the DPRK will be.

Jon put his finger on the contradistinction between Iraq being

rather less threatening and DPRK being rather more threatening.

There are consequences one might conclude from that.

Tehran may have noticed that the DPRK has suffered almost no

penalties from its continuing provocative violations—its state-ofthe-

art violations—of all international nonproliferation agreements.

This may be read and interpreted in Tehran as well.

I am concerned about the possibility of what Tehran might

‘‘learn’’ from any eventual deal that we offer the DPRK.

If we eventually come to a settlement which denuclearized the

DPRK without penalties but instead with additional benefits, that

outcome would have implications for Tehran and other would-be

proliferators in other parts of the world. That symmetry is one that

will affect the United States rather more than the ROK Government

or even the Japanese and Chinese Governments.

Congressman Burton, I submitted for the record

an essay that I contributed to the *Weekly Standard* a few months

ago where I tried to suggest some possible directions for threat reduction

with regard to DPRK.

I agree with the other panelists that there is a strong and indeed

essential case for multilateral diplomacy. Most of that diplomacy,

I would say, lies in coordinating a response to the DPRK, rather

than necessarily probing North Korean intentions. I think we know

those intentions pretty well already.

There is much more room, I believe, for economic diplomacy with

the DPRK than is often the case. The record of economic sanctions

has been pretty miserable in the 20th century, but the DPRK isn’t

your garden variety economy. It is much more vulnerable to economic

pressures than most economies in the world would be.

At the end of the day, I would say we have to be very clear that

the nuclear problem is the North Korean Government. It is the

Kim Jong Il Government and we are not going to solve the nuclear

problem in the DPRK until we get a better class of dictator in that

country.