Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It is a real

pleasure to be here and speak with you about this issue.

I have submitted a statement for the record and I would encourage

people with an interest to read that statement.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to make some points from that statement, particularly in

light of some of the remarks that have been made up to this point.

I was asked to look at this problem from the point of view of the

context of U.S. interest in the region. This is something that often

gets lost when we consider dealing with this issue. Obviously the

United States has tremendous national security concerns in dealing

with North Korea. Obviously we are worried about proliferation to

a considerable degree, but we need to keep in mind, too, that Asia

is extremely important for the United States and how the United

States manages this issue with North Korea will be a very important

determinant as to how influential the United States is and is

going to be in Asia.

This kind of emphasis, of course, leads you to the conclusion that

Mr. Cossa raised, that you really have to do this in a regional context.

You cannot try to do this by yourself. If you do, you run the

risk of being isolated and your interest in Asia will suffer greatly.

So that is my main message today, that it needs to be kept in

mind that the United States interests in Asia are extremely important

for the United States and they have to be dealt with as well,

along with these other very serious concerns that we are dealing

with.

It is obvious that the North Korean announcement reflects a failure

of United States policy, but it reflects a failure of the regional

countries. They are all concerned about this too. So it is a collective

failure.

I think the record shows that this is a long-term problem. We are

in this for the long haul in dealing with this issue. It has developed

over a long period of time and it is likely to continue.

In my statement, I underline how the North Korean regime has

really belied a lot of predictions about North Korea being weak and

collapsing and so forth. It has not done so.

The upshot of this situation is that we have a long-term difficulty

in dealing with this and, again, this underlines the importance of

the region. We have to have a cooperative relationship with the

various countries in the region in order to deal with this over the

long-term.

We will have great difficulty dealing with this by ourselves and

so in this context, too, I would argue that it is very important that

we keep our relationships with the countries in the region very

much in our minds as we go forward.

In my statement, I go through and examine some of the options

we have and, unfortunately, I come down on a position that there

really aren’t any good options at this point that would depart significantly

from what we are doing at present.

If we move toward the bilateral talks with North Korea, there

are real downsides to doing that. If we adopt a harder policy, military

pressures, or unilateral pressures on our part, this too has

major downsides for American interests in the area.

So what I argue is that we need to continue a consultative approach

with our allies and with our associates in the region.

How much pressure we are able to bring to bear on South Korea,

as Mr. Cossa suggests, on China, as several of the Members have

suggested, this is a very difficult proposition. We should certainly

VerDate Mar 21 2002 11:49 Nov 08, 2005 Jkt 000000 PO 00000 Frm 00028 Fmt 6633 Sfmt 6601 F:\WORK\AP\021705\98813.000 HINTREL1 PsN: SHIRL

23

1 Testimony before the US Congress, House International Relations Committee, Subcommittee

on Asian and Pacific Affairs, February 17, 2005 by Robert Sutter, School of Foreign Service,

Georgetown University.

try it. We should certainly consider these kinds of options and pursue

them, up to a point, but we have to keep together. We have

to keep somewhat of a united front in dealing with this issue and

develop a closer consultative approach as we move forward.

This is leading, it seems to me, toward containment, toward a

constrainment on North Korea’s provocative options and this

should be our goal, to contain this sort of thing with this kind of

a construct, but in the process please keep in mind, at least in the

back of your minds, that we need to maintain American leadership

in Asia.

This is very important for the United States. Asia is a critically

important area and it is very easy for the United States to lose its

leading position in this area through some sort of unilateral or misguided

approach that doesn’t enjoy any support in the region.

This kind of approach, it seems to me, is not in the interest of

the United States, as we follow this long-term approach in dealing

with this long-term problem with a leadership in North Korea that

is very difficult to predict, and hopefully we will be able to come

up with mechanisms to at least constrain and contain this type of

difficulty.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, my statement indicates that we

need to follow a steady and incremental approach, leading toward

a greater containment policy of North Korea. We need to strengthen

proliferation curbs, such as seen in the PSI. We need to avoid

unilateral actions that would isolate the United States from our

important allies and associates in the region, and we need to recognize

that we will need Asian cooperation to deal with this issue

that will probably, almost certainly, not be settled quickly.

This is going to take a long time and so we will need a lot of support

as we go forward in the years ahead. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Sutter follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERT SUTTER, PH.D., PROFESSOR OF ASIAN STUDIES,

SCHOOL OF FOREIGN SERVICE, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

DEALING WITH NORTH KOREA FROM A POSITION OF STRENGTH—PRESERVING US

LEADERSHIP IN ASIA1

*Abstract*

*This assessment acknowledges that North Korea’s announced development of nuclear*

*weapons highlights a continuing policy failure of the United States and concerned*

*powers. However, an examination of the risks and likely negative consequences of alternative*

*US policies shows the relative advantages of the US administration’s current*

*consultative approach with concerned powers in Asia in endeavoring over time*

*to bring greater pressure to bear on North Korea and to contain North Korean provocative*

*actions. The current US approach avoids abrupt or unilateral actions that*

*could isolate the United States and reinforces US leadership in Asia, a critically important*

*region for a wide range of US interests. It places the United States in a*

*stronger position to deal with a wide range of challenges likely to come from the unpredictable*

*but resilient North Korean regime in the years ahead.*

North Korea’s announcement last week that it has nuclear weapons underlines

a continuing failure of US policies and the efforts of American allies and associates

in Asia to halt North Korea’s efforts to build nuclear weapons. This failure is well

known by those following reports over the past two years of North Korea’s secret

VerDate Mar 21 2002 11:49 Nov 08, 2005 Jkt 000000 PO 00000 Frm 00029 Fmt 6633 Sfmt 6621 F:\WORK\AP\021705\98813.000 HINTREL1 PsN: SHIRL

24

nuclear weapons development and North Korea’s public repudiation of previous

agreements against nuclear weapons development. In a sense, the North Korean announcement

is not news but confirmation of a grim reality that officials in the

United States and a wide range of concerned governments have been dealing with

for some time.

There is grave concern in the United States and among US allies and associates

in Asia that the North Korean leadership will follow its announcement with more

provocative actions including a nuclear weapons test or the transfer of nuclear

weapons materials and technology to terrorists. Media reports earlier this year said

that the Bush administration has strong evidence that North Korea engaged in the

past in the clandestine transfer of nuclear material to Libya that could have assisted

in the development of a nuclear weapon.

How to prevent the North Korean leadership from taking the provocative actions

noted above is subject to debate among specialists and officials of concerned governments.

The task might be easier if the outside world had a reasonably reliable understanding

of the motives of the North Korean leadership, but it doesn’t. Even

those in the US government with access to special information have to be cautious

in predicting what the North Korean leader may do. Kim Jong Il is at the top of

this leadership and has shown an ability to switch policies and reverse course seemingly

unconstrained by domestic and international interests and concerns that limit

the options and decision making of more conventional world leaders. Thus, those

who tell us with seemingly authority that they know what Kim Jong Il ‘‘wants’’ and

how US and international policies should change in order to meet those wants, are

engaging at best in speculation, in my judgment.

*Reexamining US Policy Options*

US policy makers in the Bush administration and the Congress are considering

changes in US policy following the North Korean announcement. Most of these

changes appear to have serious negative consequences for US interests.

On one side are options advocated by some specialists that would see the United

States go further in meeting North Korea’s demand for bilateral talks on the nuclear

issue, US security guarantees, and greater US aid. The Bush administration

seems prepared to offer security guarantees and greater aid, but on condition that

North Korea truly ends its nuclear weapons programs. The US government resists

bilateral talks with North Korea. It appears concerned that without other foreign

powers being involved in the talks, North Korea would manipulate the bilateral

talks and thereby pressure the United States to provide assurances and aid but

with no guarantee of North Korea’s fully ending nuclear weapons development.

On the other side are specialists who argue for greater US pressure, with some

seeking the use of military force against North Korea. The balance of military power

along the Korean Demilitarized Zone gives North Korean forces the ability to kill

hundreds of thousands of South Koreans along with thousands of Americans in an

initial battle. This sobering reality and North Korea’s possible possession of nuclear

weapons head the list of factors arguing against US military attack against North

Korea.

US efforts in the Proliferation Security Initiative to work with other concerned

powers to build mechanisms to deal with North Korean and other international proliferation

activities have garnered wide international support, though China and

South Korea remain reluctant to participate. Japan is ready to cut aid and apply

greater pressure against North Korea, but South Korea seems committed to a policy

of asymmetrical normalization with North Korea involving extensive economic aid

and exchanges beneficial to North Korea. China tends to back the South Korean position.

At present, strong US efforts to pressure and isolate North Korea likely

would be resisted by South Korea and China, and possibly Russia, Australia and

the European Union.

Careful US consultation with China and North Korea’s continued provocations

over time have resulted in some change in China’s approach toward North Korea.

Beijing currently shows less willingness to defend North Korean actions and more

willingness to use pressure as well as positive incentives in order to keep North

Korea from undermining China’s primary interest in preserving stability on the peninsula.

Though China has opposed US suggestions to use the United Nations to

exert greater pressure on North Korea and US suggestions to restrict aid to the

North Korean regime, North Korea’s continuing nuclear weapons development and

provocative posturing appear to be wearing down Chinese opposition to such pressure

on the North Korean regime. If China were to change its stance in favor of

greater pressure against North Korea, South Korea would be more likely to follow,

allowing for a more unified international front against North Korean provocations.

VerDate Mar 21 2002 11:49 Nov 08, 2005 Jkt 000000 PO 00000 Frm 00030 Fmt 6633 Sfmt 6621 F:\WORK\AP\021705\98813.000 HINTREL1 PsN: SHIRL

25

2 See notably, *America’s Role in Asia: American Views*, and *America’s Role in Asia: Asian*

*Views*. San Francisco: The Asia Foundation, 2004

*Preserving US leadership for the Long Haul*

It is probably wise that US policy makers are resisting abrupt changes in policy

in seeking a solution to the North Korean nuclear weapons development. The North

Korean announcement does not fundamentally change the problems associated with

the North Korean regime and its nuclear weapons development that are likely to

be with us for some time. The North Korean regime has shown remarkable resiliency,

belying predictions of regime collapse that were prevalent in the years after

the death of Kim Il Sung in 1994. We can measure North Korean military power

and economic performance to some degree, but our understanding of the political

strengths and weaknesses of the North Korean regime is weak. Given the North Korean

regime’s resilience in the face of great adversity in the 1990s , it seems prudent

to forecast its continuation for years to come.

As the United States seeks to deal with the problems associated with the North

Korean regime, it needs not only US military strength and resolve, but the support

of the concerned powers in Asia. The above review of US options shows that the

United States cannot deal with the North Korean problems alone or in a position

isolated from key Asian powers. If the United States hopes to contain North Korean

proliferation activities and establish an international environment compelling greater

moderation by the North Korean regime, it will need to exert positive leadership

in Asia, eliciting the support and backing of the concerned Asian powers. Moreover,

the United States will continue to have vital interests in the security, prosperity,

and political orientations of Asia. How the US government deals with the North Korean

issue will be an important determinant in whether the United States continues

to play a leading role in this vibrant world area or is marginalized as other rising

powers, notably China, move into positions of greater regional prominence.

Looking out, a number of authoritative commentators have expressed concern

over a perceived decline in US leadership and influence in Asia on account of US

preoccupations elsewhere, military assertiveness, and poor diplomacy, and a concurrent

rise of Chinese influence.2 They see US emphasis on geo-strategic issues, notably

the war in Iraq and combating international terrorists, much less attractive to

Asian governments and people than China’s accommodating geo-economic emphasis.

In fact, however, the actual decline of US influence relative to China or others

seems relatively small amid continued evidence of US leadership in Asia.

Elite and public opinion in many Asian countries remains strongly critical of the

US government, but Asian governments by and large have reacted pragmatically to

US policies, seeking to keep relations with the United States on a good foundation.

The United States is important for their economic development and the security environment

in Asia. They remain wary of rising China and its possible ambitions,

and see the United States as a needed counterweight. Even in South Korea, a country

swept by anti-US sentiment and pro-China fever in recent years, government officials

are clear eyed in assessing that continued good South Korean ties with the

United States are essential in South Korea’s ability to deal effectively with international

powers, notably China.

One way to assess the perceived US decline relative to China is to compare the

recent situation in Asia with past periods of US decline and rise of other powers.

In the past few decades, there have been two notable periods of perceived or actual

US decline in Asia. The first was the post Vietnam War period which saw a marked

rise of Soviet military-backed expansion in Asia. The second was in the latter part

of the 1980s when Japan seemed to dominate much of East Asia while the United

States seemed unable to compete with Japan, even in the US domestic market. In

both cases, the perceived US weaknesses turned out to be exaggerated as did the

strengths of the newly rising powers. It is unclear if this third major episode of perceived

US decline, along with China’s rise, is subject to the same exaggeration and

misinterpretation. What is clear to seasoned observers is that whatever decline has

taken place in US power relative to China does not compare in scope or importance

to the challenge to US power and influence in the 1970s and the late 1980s.

It seems logical to conclude that the impact of China’s rising influence will add

to recent challenges to the United States in Asia such as the North Korean nuclear

crisis and disagreements over Iraq and the war on terrorism, to have the effect of

weakening and diverting US leadership in the region. Nevertheless, such actual or

potential challenges will remain balanced to a considerable degree by many continuing

strengths and favorable trends in Asia for US policy and interests. US leaders

have options to build on those strengths and favorable trends to insure US leadership

in Asia relative to China or others for many years to come. The Bush admin-

VerDate Mar 21 2002 11:49 Nov 08, 2005 Jkt 000000 PO 00000 Frm 00031 Fmt 6633 Sfmt 6621 F:\WORK\AP\021705\98813.000 HINTREL1 PsN: SHIRL

26

3 Because of North Korea’s military power, US military options against North Korea are more

limited and difficult that those in the case of Iraq; US strategic deployments in Southwest Asia

in 2003–2005 further limited US military options against North Korea.

4 Robert Sutter, ‘‘United States: Leadership maintained amid continuing challenges,’’ in Ashley

Tellis and Michael Wills (eds.) *Strategic Asia 2004–2005* Seattle: National Bureau of Asian

Research, 2004, p. 37–66. *What the world thinks in 2002*, The Pew research center, December

2002, *http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=165*, p. T–45, T–50.

5 Michael Swaine, ‘‘Reverse Course? The Fragile Turnaround in US-China Relations,’’ *Carnegie*

*Endowment for International Peace Policy Brief 22*, February 2003, p.1–3. Bonnie Glaser, ‘‘China

and US disagree, but with smiles,’’ *Comparative Connections*, April 2003. Robert Sutter, ‘‘Grading

Bush’s China Policy,’’ *PACNET* 10, March 8, 2002. *http://www.csis.org/pacfor*

6 Ralph Cossa, ‘‘Bush-Roh: Closing the gap,’’ *PACNET* 20, May 20, 2003. *http://www.csis.org/*

*pacfor*. Greg Jaffe, ‘‘Pentagon Prepares to scatter soldiers to remote corners,’’ *Wall Street Journal*,

May 27, 2003, p.1. Paul Wolfowitz, ‘‘Sustaining the US commitment in Asia,’’ *PACNET* 22A,

June 5, 2003; and Ralph Cossa, Force restructuring anxiety,’’ *PACNET* 22, June 3, 2003, both

available at http://www.csis.org/pacfor

7 *What the world thinks in 2002*, The Pew research center, December 2002, *http://peoplepress.*

*org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=165*, p. T–45, T–50.

8 Robert Sutter, ‘‘Why China matters,’’ *Washington Quarterly* Winter 2003–2004 p. 75–89.

istration’s response to the Tsunami disaster in December 2004 underlined the kinds

of options the US can follow to secure its influence in Asia. The Bush administration’s

response to the North Korean nuclear weapons problem poses another opportunity

for constructive efforts sustaining US leadership in Asia.

*US Strengths in Asia*

At a time of US preoccupation with Iraq and other priorities, the Bush administration

has adjusted in generally pragmatic ways to unexpected Asian challenges,

notably in the Korean peninsula—an area of much more salient concern than Iraq

to most Asian governments. While it justified US pre-emption and unilateral action

in other parts of the world, the Bush administration in practice has sought to deal

with the North Korean crisis and other issues in Asia through broad international

consultation and engagement that is welcomed by concerned Asian powers.3 Of

course, as is graphically illustrated by last week’s North Korean announcement,

North Korea’s ongoing efforts to develop nuclear weapons continue. A North Korean

nuclear weapons test or transfer of a weapon to a terrorist organization could precipitate

sharper divisions between the United States and Asian powers or within the

US government.

Several key strengths in US-Asian relations sustain US regional leadership.4 Government

leaders on both sides of the Pacific support the US security commitment

and military presence in Asia. The global war on terrorism has strengthened US

resolve to remain actively involved in regional security. The strong US military

presence is generally welcomed by Asian government leaders. Chinese leaders have

modified their past criticism of the US security role.5

Despite debate over the size and deployment of US forces in South Korea, the

South Korean and US governments endeavor to manage the debate without jeopardizing

strong mutual interests supported by a continued US military presence in

South Korea.6 Meanwhile, polls that showed setbacks for the US image in certain

countries in Asia also showed that most of those polled retained overall positive

views of US leadership and that clear majorities in Asia agreed that their interests

would suffer if the United States were no longer the world’s dominant power.7

Under the Bush administration, the United States maintains open markets despite

occasional aberrations such as moves in 2002 to protect US farmers and steel

manufacturers, or US official complaints in 2004 about US job losses to Asia and

unfair currency values by China and Japan. Asian governments view the US economy

as more important to Asian economic well being, especially after the Asian economic

crisis and Japan’s persisting economic difficulties. Though China is a new engine

of regional growth, US economic prospects remain much more important for

Asian development. The United States in recent years has absorbed a very high percentage

(about 40 percent, according to US government figures) of the exports from

China, which is emerging as the export-manufacturing base for investors from a

wide range of advanced Asian economies. The US market continues to absorb one

third of the exports of Japan. The economies of South Korea, Taiwan, and ASEAN

rely on the US market to receive around 20 percent of their exports. Much is written

about growing Asian trade with China, and indeed China’s share of inter regional

trade is important and expanding.8 However, US trade continues to surpass China’s

trade with the region, especially in the key area of absorbing completed manufactured

exports from Asia. Meanwhile, US direct foreign investment has grown notably

in China; the level there is less than US investment in Australia, Hong Kong,

VerDate Mar 21 2002 11:49 Nov 08, 2005 Jkt 000000 PO 00000 Frm 00032 Fmt 6633 Sfmt 6621 F:\WORK\AP\021705\98813.000 HINTREL1 PsN: SHIRL

27

9 Figures from US Department of Commerce, 2003, 2004. Chinese government figures show

Chinese exports to the United States as much less than seen in US government figures.

10 The United States did not seek to bring China’s human rights conditions before the UN

Human Rights Commission in 2003. George Gedda, ‘‘US won’t propose resolution on China,’’ *Associated*

*Press* April 11, 2003 (internet version). It offered a resolution in 2004.

11 Greg Jaffe, ‘‘Pentagon prepares to scatter troops to remote corners,’’ *Wall Street Journal*,

May 27, 2003. See also discussion in *US Strategy in the Asia-Pacific Region*. Washington DC:

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2003.

12 ‘‘The acceptability of American power,’’ *Economist* June 29, 2002 (internet version). See also,

G. John Ikenberry, *Strategic Reactions to American Preeminence*. US National Intelligence

Council Conference Report, July 28, 2003 available at *http://www.odci.gov/nic/*

*confreports*lstratreact.html.

13 See the chapters on China, Japan, India, and Russia in Richard Ellings et. al. (eds.) *Strategic*

*Asia 2003–2004* Seattle: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2003.

14 Benjamin Self, ‘‘China and Japan: a fac¸ade of friendship,’’ *Washington Quarterly* 26:1, p 77–

88 (winter 2002–2003). Robert Sutter, *The United States and East Asia*. Lanham MD: Rowman

and Littlefield, 2003, p. 199–200, 222–223. Francine Frankel and Harry Harding. *The India-*

*China relationship: what the United States needs to know*. New York: Columbia University

Press, 2004.

Singapore, or Japan. China is only beginning to play a significant role in investing

abroad.9

Despite strong rhetorical emphasis, Bush administration policy has been pragmatic

in promoting human rights, democracy and political values in Asia. As the

United States sought allies and supporters in the global war on terrorism and other

endeavors, it has moderated its approach in these areas, an adjustment generally

welcomed in Asia.10

After the September 11, 2001 attacks on America, the United States mobilized

military, political, and economic power that proved overwhelming to adversaries and

duly impressed Asian states. US power contradicted earlier predictions of US decline;

the United States became more powerful and influential in Asia and the Pacific

than at any time since the Vietnam War and perhaps earlier.

Amid criticism by some US non-government experts and grumblings in the ranks

of the US military, US defense planners moved ahead with planned realignment

and downsizing of US forces in Asia and elsewhere abroad, while sustaining large

ground force commitments in Iraq.11 On balance, the changes did not appear to

change the prevailing situation where some in the Asian region might wish to challenge

or confront the United States, and might be more inclined to do so if the US

were seen as ‘‘bogged down’’ in Iraq; but most remained reluctant to do so given the

dangers they would face in opposition to the world’s dominant power, with a leadership

seemingly prepared to use that power against its enemies.12

The major regional powers, including Japan and such rising powers as China and

India, continued to be domestically preoccupied and are likely to remain so for some

time to come.13 Focused on internal issues, they seek support from the United

States and other powers, and do not seek difficulties in their foreign relations.

Japan, China, India, Russia, and other Asian states are actively maneuvering and

hedging, seeking new and more multifaceted arrangements to secure their interests

in the uncertain regional environment. They sometimes cooperate together. However,

the leading Asian powers reflect deep divisions and competition in Asian and

world affairs. Their mutual suspicions and competing interests indicate that any

meaningful cooperation among them seriously detrimental to US interests remains

unlikely. Moreover, this situation of hedging and rivalry also means that should one

of these Asian powers emerge as a dominant power, as China appears to be doing,

the others have the option of aligning more closely with the United States and one

another in order to protect their interests. The recent behavior of Japan, Russia,

and India in improving relations with the United States seems to support this conclusion.

14

Another recent strength in US policy toward Asia has to do with managing US

domestic pressures on US policy toward Asia. In general, US policy makers have

done a better job in managing the often-strong US domestic pressures that in the

post cold war period tended to drive US policy in extreme directions detrimental to

a sound and balanced approach to Asia. President Bill Clinton’s engagement policy

toward China in his second term was more coherent than the policy in his first term

that appeared driven by competing US domestic interests. President George W.

Bush’s policy is better suited to mainstream US opinion regarding China and has

the added advantage of avoiding the need for significant US concessions toward

VerDate Mar 21 2002 11:49 Nov 08, 2005 Jkt 000000 PO 00000 Frm 00033 Fmt 6633 Sfmt 6621 F:\WORK\AP\021705\98813.000 HINTREL1 PsN: SHIRL

28

15 Hugo Restall, ‘‘Tough love for China,’’ *The Wall Street Journal* October 21, 2002 (internet

version)

China on sensitive issues like Taiwan that seriously exacerbate the US domestic debate

about China policy.15

Meanwhile the Bush administration has improved US relations with all the great

powers in Asia. This strengthens US leadership in the region, and reinforces the US

government’s ability to deal with crises and regional difficulties. The United States

having good relations with Japan and China at the same time is very rare. The

United States being the dominant power in South Asia and having good relations

with both India and Pakistan is unprecedented, as is the current US maintenance

of good relations with both Beijing and Taipei.

*Conclusion*

On balance, the Bush administration appears wise in pursuing a policy toward

North Korea that preserves a leading role and influence for the United States in

Asia that will be essential in US efforts to deal with the North Korean nuclear

weapons problem in the years ahead. The policy also preserves broader US security,

economic, and political interests in this very important world region.

The North Korean announcement of the past week should not prompt unilateral

US actions that would be likely to seriously alienate Asian powers and isolate the

United States in the region. The steady and incremental US efforts to build international

support to contain and pressure the North Korean regime to end nuclear

weapons development seem more advisable under existing circumstances. In consultations

with allies and associates who have been exposed to North Korean provocations

and maneuvers in the Six Party Talks, the United States may eventually

be able to come up with a way to conduct bilateral talks with North Korea with

the supervision and support of other concerned powers, thereby avoiding North Korean

manipulation of the talks to pressure the United States for concessions without

North Korea truly ending nuclear weapons development.

Strengthening internationally popular US-backed efforts to curb North Korean export

of weapons of mass destruction represents a key element in a US containment

policy. Unilateral use of US military force is a last resort risking disastrous consequences

for South Korea and overall US interests in Asia.

I tend to endorse Mr. Eberstadt’s view of North Korea’s

intentions and so when you have these informal discussions

with North Korea, you have to calculate that you are dealing with

a regime that is pretty ruthless and therefore extremely manipulative.

This has to be done, I think, carefully so that you don’t get exploited.

I think it is extremely easy to get exploited by the North

Korean regime.

My sense is that this should be on the table. We should be discussing

this and I think I would judge that this might be well done

in coordination with the U.S. Government so that it isn’t so outof-

the-box that the Administration would be surprised by it or so

forth.

I am sorry. I thought you were talking about a private——

I see what you mean.

I see.

I see. The issue is much clearer to me now. That

does seem sensible, sir. Yes. That does seem like a workable approach.

The timing is very important and how you do this and not look

like you are rewarding North Korea’s provocative behavior. I think

the goal of the international effort to constrain North Korea is to

constrain them from provocative actions. How do we do that? If

this type of approach fits, I think it would work fine, but I think

it——

I tend to agree with you and I think it would have,

under the right circumstances, a very good effect on our allies and

associates in Asia, this kind of approach. I wouldn’t think right

now is the time to do it, but I think over time.

This is something to talk to them about to come up

with something and maybe to have some efforts in that regard. I

think that would help.

Measuring it with North Korea. I worked as the National Intelligence

Officer for East Asia for 21⁄2 years. I never could get a fix

on what the North Korean regime wanted. I never could get a fix

on why they were in power.

There are lots of speculations, lots of analysis, and so what reaction

this would have on the North Korean regime, I think you are

dealing with something that is very vague. We really don’t know,

it seems to me, and so as far as what they would do, the North

Koreans would do, I think it is very difficult to predict.

What effect it would have on our containment efforts and our

multilateral efforts to constrain the North Koreans, I think would

be positive.

I would like to address your comment on China, if

I might, just for a moment. I think it is important to keep in mind

that China will adjust its policy in the region according to its own

interest.

We are not in the business of making deals with China. You did

this for us. No. They do it for their own interests and I think this

is illuminating, because the North Korean behavior makes it in

China’s interest to be more active.

The North Koreans are more dangerous. The Chinese have to

react to this and I think this kind of dynamic is taking place

throughout the region.

It takes awhile for it to sink in to the region, but I think it

makes it easier in that context. It makes it easier for the United

States, if it follows a consultative approach. And I think in the case

of North Korea, particularly in the last several years, the Bush Administration

has been consultative. It hasn’t been unilateral or preemptive.

In that context, it makes it easier for the United States to build

up a united front to deal with this issue. North Korea is the problem,

not the United States as far as China and the region are concerned.

If I could add a couple of points on this. I somewhat

disagree with Jon on the U.S. responsibility for taking all the actions

first before the region can be expected to react positively to

U.S. leadership.

It seems to me that North Korea is doing a very good job of galvanizing

the region on the need for cooperative efforts to deal with

North Korea. As they pursue this kind of a path, they increasingly

identify themselves as the regional problem and so here I would

argue that perhaps Jon is right in looking at these U.S. initiatives.

We certainly should look at things and maybe they will work, but

I think what definitely will work is a very close United States consultative

arrangement with the countries in the region, based on

the notion that North Korea is a problem.

I think if we are looking at this over the long haul, and I submit

that this is a long haul problem, this is the way to deal with it,

from a position of leadership, U.S. leadership in the region.

We should definitely take those steps that will strengthen our

leadership in the region that will add to a constrainment of North

Korea provocative behavior.

We have common ground with countries like China. We don’t

want provocative behavior by North Korea, and so we should build

on this and I think we can.

It actually is more broad than that, when we look at things like

the proliferation security initiative. And so these kinds of approaches

are definitely areas of positive reinforcement for the

United States.

The areas of bilateral interaction with North Korea are more

questionable. How the North Koreans will react, I think, is not well

known and not easy to predict.