I would like to say a few words, but I think we have

a vote that is pending.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to

thank you and our distinguished Ranking Member of the Subcommittee

for allowing me to say a few words.

Secretary Hill, everybody was disturbed by your lateness but I

was hoping that you finally got word that you can go to Pyongyang.

So I was rejoicing in this corner.

With its active preparations to test the long range missile capable

of striking the United States, North Korea has again grabbed

the headlines around the globe. The leadership in Pyongyang is

clearly frustrated that the world’s eyes have turned from North

Korea to Iran and that new concessions were being offered to

Tehran, not to Pyongyang.

But these preparations may be more than posturing. North

Korea may actually believe that the United States, Japan, South

Korea, will be so cowed by Pyongyang’s display of military prowess

that they will quickly return to the Six-Party Talks laden with new

presents.

Mr. Chairman, you and I traveled together to Pyongyang last August,

which was my second visit to North Korea, last year. As we

discovered, it remains a Herculean task to pierce the veil of the

North Korean leadership to ascertain their true intentions.

But if Pyongyang thinks that it can blast its way back to the Six-

Party Talks, they are sorely mistaken. A long range missile test

would be a major setback to these important talks and only increase

the long list of demands from the world’s civilized nations.

I, too, am frustrated that the Six-Party Talks have not borne

fruit, but it is self-evident that Pyongyang bears most of the responsibility

for this unfortunate fact.

North Korea has refused to return to the talks because the

United States took long overdue action against North Korea’s counterfeiting

of American currency and laundering the ill-gotten currency

through banks in Macao. Rather than stomp away from the

table, North Korea should take the necessary steps to stop these

illegal activities.

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Let me say an additional word on the subject, Mr. Chairman.

Governments like that of North Korea will have to learn, as we

hopefully move toward normalization, that we can move toward

diplomatic relations at some point, yet we will reserve the right to

criticize actions of the government with which we profoundly disagree.

And this wholly unrealistic notion that in a totally unrelated

arena like the counterfeiting of our currency, a criticism should be

cause to walk out of the Six-Party Talks is absurd and will clearly

be counterproductive.

Having said this about North Korea, I think it is clear that we

are not without blame for the stalling of the Six-Party Talks. The

United States has the most skilled diplomatic corps in the world.

But when it comes to North Korea policy, our career diplomats

have had their mouth taped shut.

I am fully behind the Six-Party Talks. But it is imperative that

we find more ways to engage with the North Koreans on a bilateral

basis. I am disappointed by the Administration’s failure to send our

distinguished witness today, Ambassador Chris Hill, one of our

ablest diplomats, to Pyongyang to attempt to open up new channels

of communication. He was invited to go to Pyongyang, and that invitation

should have been accepted.

The Six-Party Talks will get absolutely nowhere, absolutely nowhere,

as long as we fail to show basic respect and diplomatic courtesy

to the North Korean Government.

The Chinese, Mr. Chairman, also bear their share of responsibility.

We appreciate their willingness to sponsor the Six-Party

Talks, but Beijing merely pays lip service to the idea of pressuring

North Korea to do the right thing, refusing to use their enormous

overwhelming economic leverage over Pyongyang.

Mr. Chairman, there are many reasons why the Six-Party Talks

are stalled, but nothing justifies a North Korean test of a long

range missile. If North Korea carries through on its implicit threat,

it may find itself back at the bargaining table some day. But rather

than finding a new tray of goodies, they will undoubtedly face an

even longer list of demands from the civilized world.

That is not in the interests of the North Korean people, nor the

leadership in Pyongyang.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We can’t hear you here, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

A couple of thoughts and then a question, Mr. Secretary. When

I first visited North Korea in January last year, then when I visited

North Korea with our distinguished Chairman in August of

last year, I detected a very significant gradual, but perceptible

change in the climate and in the atmosphere in which our discussions

unfolded.

When I first visited in January, the climate of the discussions

were as bitter cold and frigid and unbending as was the weather.

By the time I finished the first visit, 4 days later, it was a considerably

more relaxed atmosphere.

Then Chairman Leach and I went there together in August. The

discussions with the political counterparts started out at a more

cordial level and ended up considerably more so. And our discussions

with the military leadership that we had also underwent a

parallel, although not as pronounced, improvement in the atmosphere.

As a matter of fact, toward the end of our discussions, several

very constructive suggestions by Mr. Leach and some by me, attempting

to replicate the ping-pong diplomacy that we engaged in

with China, exchanging wrestling teams or inviting the Pyongyang

Circus were given, it appeared to us, fairly serious consideration.

Now, the goals that I had—and I don’t presume to talk for my

friend, Mr. Leach, although I think he shares these goals—was to

have basically one message. The proper venue for the basic issue

is the Six-Party Talks; and I fully agree with the Chairman that

I think most, if not all, of the Members of Congress favor the Six-

Party Talks as the only relevant venue for nuclear and arms discussions.

But simultaneously there could well be bilateral venues for discussing

a number of other issues. We can talk and we can chew

gum at the same time, and occasionally these activities reinforce

one another.

I would like to ask you, in the hope that the current crisis will

deescalate as saner councils prevail in Pyongyang, what is your

prediction with respect to the reaction of the other members of the

Six-Party Talks, were North Korea to go through with this absurdly

foolish or foolishly absurd threat of using a missile?

No. Just your views.

Would you be more specific?

May I ask a corollary question, Mr. Chairman?

Thank you. In your meetings with the North Koreans,

Mr. Secretary, directly or inferentially, did the issue arise that

I alluded to earlier, namely, the North Koreans will have to understand

that under the very best of circumstances, the United States,

either at the governmental level or certainly at the congressional

level, will raise awkward, difficult, embarrassing issues as we do

with all other countries.

We have long-standing diplomatic relations with Russia, and four

Members of Congress, Senators McCain and Lieberman and Congressman

Dreier and I just wrote to all the heads of State of the

G7 cautioning them about the G8 summit upcoming in St. Petersburg,

urging them to meet separately and privately before or after.

We have long-standing relations with Saudi Arabia, but the

State Department human rights report details in excruciating minutia

the horrendous human rights record which exists with respect

to women and others.

Have you made any attempt to explain to your North Korean

counterparts that even under the most ideal circumstances, under

the most constructive pattern of development any of us can foresee,

they had better brace themselves for criticism along a full spectrum

of items, because this is the nature of a free society?

That was my question.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.