Committee will come to order.

Let me first announce that there will be votes in about 10 or 15

minutes on the House Floor. So what I would like to do is begin

perhaps with opening statements of the panel and hopefully of the

Secretary and then we will commence.

In any regard we greatly appreciate Assistant Secretary Hill

making himself available to the Subcommittee on such short notice.

Ambassador Hill, since you last appeared before us 3 months ago,

some aspects of this strategic situation with North Korea have

changed and others have not.

One thing that unfortunately has not changed is the apparent

lifelessness of the Six-Party process. We are now 9 months beyond

the Joint Statement of Principles under which North Korea committed

to abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs

but are no closer to realizing those goals.

I personally regret that the Administration has not during this

time period allowed you or other emissaries to visit Pyongyang to

test the boundaries and push the implementation of the Joint

Statement.

At least two important things have changed. First, the North Koreans

have had an additional 9 months to produce fissile material.

An expert report released 3 days ago assesses that North Korea

has now separated enough plutonium for somewhere between 4

and 13 nuclear weapons, more than a 50 percent increase over the

amount they were believed to have possessed prior to 2003.

Second, the North Koreans have reportedly stood up a long range

ballistic missile at a launch pad in Musudan-ni though it remains

unclear whether those actions represent preparations for an actual

launch or a provocative plea for attention.

In rejecting a surprising proposal by former Secretary of Defense

William Perry, a proposal also endorsed by former Vice President

Walter Mondale, to destroy the missile before launch, National Security

Adviser Hadley recently stated that we think diplomacy is

the right answer and that is what we are pursuing. While I share

Mr. Hadley’s aversion to a reckless first strike, I must respectfully

question the seriousness with which the Administration is pursuing

the various diplomatic options available to it.

It is sometimes remarked, usually humorously, that adults rarely

get to go far beyond junior high school thinking. When I was a student

at the Sudlow junior high school at Davenport, Iowa, one of

the social games we used to engage in was a staredown, a challenge

to see who could stare the longest at someone else without

blinking. Bizarrely, our interactions with North Korea seem to

have certain staredown dimensions that are just as juvenile.

I can think of few things that are less rational than tying the

United States national interests to the question of blinking. By

treating most forms of direct conversation with North Korea as

brinksmanship rather than statesmanship, the Administration has

not demonstrated a lack of trust in Pyongyang, rather a lack of

trust in its own abilities to conduct creative diplomacy in pursuit

of our national interest.

In adversarial situations specific results can seldom be achieved

without human interaction. Diplomacy is all about the respectful

exchange of perspectives between parties even and perhaps especially

between mutually mistrustful parties.

It is irrational for the most powerful country on earth to be fearful

of diplomacy. It is realistic to measure your enemies and understand

their motivations and actions. It is pseudorealism to ignore

the opportunities to reach mutual accommodations simply because

an effort might involve taking the first step.

At present, the United States is in an ironic circumstance where

we have tied ourselves exclusively to a multilateral process in

which other parties are taking the lead.

It is self-evident that the Six-Party Talks are a reasonable framework

within which to pursue the denuclearization of North Korea,

but it is also true that other parties have supplemented Six-Party

contacts with bilateral discussions outside the Beijing framework

and that they would welcome more robust, direct United States initiatives

with North Korea.

For us to remain instead diplomatically reactive cedes too much

initiative to actors whose interests are not identical to our own and

allows North Koreans and others to paint us an intransigent party.

Six weeks ago I proposed to the executive branch a precise initiative

for seizing the initiative in restarting a dialogue with North

Korea. I believe it would be appropriate to send a Presidential

envoy of significant stature. The envoy’s message should neither be

a macho line in the sand approach nor a begging, please return to

the talks plea. It should be an approach designed to induce both

a negotiating commitment and an attitudinal breakthrough.

In my judgment the most promising proposal would be one that

provides impetus to the parties’ previous commitments and a Joint

Statement to develop a peace treaty and bring the Korean War to

a formal conclusion. A precise date and site for a holding of a formal

conference should be put on the table with the goal of receiving

an acceptance during the visit.

An understanding might also follow that the Six-Party Talks

would resume shortly after the peace conference and that negotia-

tions might also then commence on the possibility of establishing

liaison offices and eventually Embassies in our respective capitals.

The diplomatic issue our Government has to come to grips with

today is a problem of sequencing. Which comes first, the chicken

or the egg, is a most cheerful and abstract philosophical discussion

Americans engage in. But which precedes the other, talk or war,

is neither cheerful nor abstract. Experience would seem to indicate

that while war may not be averted by negotiations, it is less likely

to break out if direct dialogue occurs beforehand.

In an adversarial situation, specific results can seldom be

achieved without this kind of human touch. That is why our founders

certainly contemplated that the new

American Republic would have diplomatic relations with undemocratic

states. It is why Israeli Prime Minister Rabin, when

faulted for talking to Arafat, noted that you don’t make peace with

friends.

With regard to North Korea, sequencing has been a particularly

critical United States concern. Some in the White House have held

that nothing should occur until North Korea capitulates in the nuclear

issue. But a peace treaty stands outside the other Six-Party

issues to the degree that it does not involve all the parties and

makes sense whatever the results.

The fact that North Korea has indicated support for such a prospect

should not cause us to think that it is to our strategic advantage

to hold a peace agreement hostage to the nuclear issue. In fact

it would help to eliminate one of North Korea’s stated pretexts for

its nuclear activities.

Taking the initiative to provide framework for a peace conference

signaling an end to the Korean War would underscore a peaceful

intent and remind the Korean people, North and South, that the

United States singularly and unequivocally supports a peaceful reunification

of the peninsula.

I have not received an administrative response to this proposal.

In the meantime, 4 weeks ago the North Koreans invited Secretary

Hill to Pyongyang for bilateral discussions in implementing the

Joint Statement, an invitation the Administration declined.

Subsequently and perhaps in response the North Koreans finished

assembling a long range ballistic missile on the Taepodong

launch pad. Given North Korea’s track record, I of course share the

Administration’s healthy skepticism about its strategic intentions,

but skepticism is an attitude, not a policy. It is critical for the Administration

to form a creative, coherent response to the growing

North Korean nuclear threats to our national security.

To this end we cannot say we are committed to a diplomatic solution

if our diplomats are not allowed to accept invitations to talk.

Americans understand the North Korean challenge. What is less

explicable is the U.S. posture. Time and opportunity cannot continue

to be frittered away. In governance policy to be effective must

be timely as well as thoughtful.

Mr. Faleomavaega.

Before proceeding, Tom, do you have an opening

statement?

I think we will do it this way then. We will recess

for the vote and then come back for your statement as well as for

Mr. Burton’s and the gentlelady from Guam.

I think that will be more appropriate. The Committee

will be in recess pending the vote. And let me mention to

the audience this could be a series of votes that might take up to

half an hour. I am not sure, but we will come as rapidly as we can.

Committee will come back to order and let me turn

to the Ranking Member of the Full Committee, our distinguished

colleague, Mr. Lantos, for an opening statement.

Thank you very much for that thoughtful statement.

Mr. Burton.

Thank you. We have invited the gentlelady from

Guam, Mrs. Bordallo, to john our hearing today. Would you care

to make any opening comments?

Well, thank you and we are honored to have your

presence with the Subcommittee today and I am sure I speak for

everyone of saying that the concerns of Guam are the concerns of

all Americans.

Our witness is Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific affairs,

Christopher Hill. Ambassador Hill has served in Belgrade,

Warsaw, Seoul, Toronto. He speaks Polish, Serbo-Croatian, Macedonian,

Albanian and some English. He is a former Ambassador

to Korea and as well as Poland and we are honored to have you,

Chris, and the Subcommittee holds you in the highest esteem.

Please proceed as you see fit, and your full statement will be put

in the record and you may proceed any way you want.

Thank you very much, Ambassador Hill. Let me just

begin with the Taepodong 2 missile issue. As you know, former

Secretary Perry, as well as the former Vice President Walter Mondale

suggested a preemptive strike ought to be on our planning

agenda.

How do you see that proposal?

Several times this month, the DPRK has released

rather strongly worded military statements about our aerial surveillance,

and in the past it led up to an attempted interception of

an RC–135, which is a very unusual hostile act by North Korea.

Do you think that type of a circumstance could develop again

and, if it did, what would its consequences be?

Which brings me to the possibility of direct talks as

well. I think your case for the Six-Party Talks is thoughtful, arguably

compelling, but that doesn’t mean they cannot be——

Part of that is my mother’s fault. She didn’t give me

a William Jennings Bryan voice.

But the case for the Six-Party Talks is clearly powerful. My

query is not questioning that, but questioning whether they ought

to be supplemented by direct discussions and, for instance, one of

the structural quandaries that seems self-evident as I have looked

from afar, although once I was in Beijing when these talks were

going on, is that you have a relatively small number of people from

all countries present and particularly of concern from North Korea,

and the people that are represented are credible diplomats. But the

decision-making presumably in North Korea is done by other people

that are going to be calling the final shots. And one of the advantages

of a direct conversation would appear to be that an American

diplomat could speak with a larger sector of the North Korean

governmental decision-making process and that might be very critical

in this kind of situation, to be able to directly lay out the alternatives

and also to bring people into personal kinds of stakes in the

discussions.

One of the things that is human nature, if you take a legislative

body, lots of decisions get made that a legislator doesn’t particularly

agree overwhelmingly with, but if a legislator is part of the

discussion and the decision-making it is easier to go along with.

And I just think at a very human level, the notion of United

States having direct contact with the decision-making process in

North Korea itself might be very helpful. Does that strike you as

a credible perspective or not?

Fair enough. I am going to turn to Mr.

Faleomavaega. Before doing that I just want to make one observation.

There is some commonalities to all negotiations and if you

take the United States and labor management, there is generally

an effort of a labor union not to have its top person negotiate and

in a business never to have its top person negotiate, and you have

to get to the top people to get decisions made.

And one of the advantages of a high level American demarche to

North Korea is that you talk to the people that make decisions.

And you skip the—that has a tendency to precipitate decision-making

and always in labor-management relations you start out low

and by the time you get toward the top you get decisions made.

And unless you get to the top, you often don’t.

And so I would just indicate again that the logic of an American

demarche makes sense. I take seriously your concern that now we

have a new threatening missile on the launch pad. But I would tell

you we have been going on many, many, many months without a

missile on the launch pad and we still were playing the game of

staredown, and I think it ought to be reconsidered.

Mr. Faleomavaega.

If I could interrupt you, we will come back in the second

round.

Mr. Burton.

Before turning to Mr. Lantos, let me make it very

clear, no one on this Committee has suggested abandoning the Six-

Party Talks. So be careful of straw man representations. The only

question is whether these talks should be supplemented by direct

negotiations.

Mr. Lantos.

Of course.

Mr. Sherman.

Ms. Bordallo.

Thank you, ma’am.

Mr. Faleomavaega.

Ms. Bordallo?

Let me just end with one aspect of this debate.

The U.S. has taken a position in the Six-Party Talks not to have

direct negotiations outside the Six-Party Talks, although direct negotiations

within the Six-Party Talks. There is a group—and I

don’t associate this necessarily with the Administration—that has

implied that they think hardheadedness on negotiations implies a

greater likelihood of regime change; and there is an aspect of this

that I want to query you on, because it is something that I certainly

had a sense for when I was in North Korea.

It strikes me that one of the analogies that people like to think

about regime change is to Eastern Europe. But when you travel in

North Korea, you have no sense of a lot of labor leaders like Lech

Walesa or poets like Vaclav Havel.

And about the only alternative to the top of this regime would

be the military. I mean, regime change, to me, would be to the military,

not to the people.

Does that seem to you to be a likely scenario, or have you

thought about any scenarios?

Well, I share that. Policy change is the issue.

Let me just conclude with the observation that we appreciate

your excellent testimony. You noted that all countries, including

the United States, look every day at human rights of their own accord;

and to me, in North Korea the great human rights change we

need involves you, sir. That we have got to unshackle the Assistant

Secretary of State for Asian Affairs and allow him a little greater

freedom of travel.

Yes, of course.

Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

The Committee is adjourned.