Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank you for holding the hearing on one of the most

urgent issues of our time; and I do want to join Mr. Lantos in

praising your extraordinary leadership, your incredible commitment

to human rights and humanitarian issues, your work product,

your laws, which will clearly endure the test of time. They have

helped countless numbers of vulnerable and disenfranchised people,

and I want to thank you for that leadership. It is extraordinary.

Mr. Chairman, the threat posed by nuclear weapons is the cause

for the utmost concern and vigilance by all of us, but the possession

of such means for mass destruction in the hands of a ruthless dictator

like Kim Jong-il necessitates a smart, robust, coordinated and

comprehensive response from the international community; and I

want to thank Ambassador Burns and the Administration for taking

the lead, for their dogged determination to try to mitigate this

unconscionable threat.

In the course of our discussions, Mr. Chairman, I do believe it

is crucial that we address the relationship between this security

threat and the abysmal lack of respect for fundamental human

rights by the North Korean regime. As Pope John Paul II said so

aptly, ‘‘If you want peace, work for justice’’; and I believe that we

must work overtime to try to ensure that the people of North Korea

who, like people around the world, are deserving of fundamental

and basic human rights, not the gulag, not the torture.

As we all know, the use of torture by the North Korean regime

is a spectacle of horror; and as I think you know, Mr. Chairman,

along with Jim Leach, we have Co-Chaired three hearings on

human rights abuses in North Korea in this Congress alone. It is

time for action; and, again, I think this hearing helps us to get a

better feel where we are today and what we need to do going forward.

Again, I want to thank you for convening this important hearing.

Yield back.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Let me ask you, Ambassador Burns, on the human rights issue

again—and I know you and I have had many discussions in the

past about the linkage, and let’s not forget that the demise of the

Warsaw Pact countries and the Soviet Union itself didn’t happen—

arms control was important. Containment was important. Trying to

mitigate the threat with regards to the nuclear arsenal that the Soviets

possessed, obviously, was an ongoing, almost ever-present

concern of all Presidents and Congresses. But it was the human

rights issue, beginning with the labor rights issue with Lech

Walesa, religious freedom, and eventually that led to the amelioration

of that terrible vexing threat.

There is a report that just came out, as I am sure you have seen,

Failure to Protect, a call for the UN Security Council to act in

North Korea, which has been commissioned by three very eminent

persons: Vaclav Havel; Bondevik, the former Prime Minister of

Norway; and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Elie Wiesel. It makes a

number of recommendations for a United Nations nonpunitive resolution

to bring heightened focus on all of these human rights

issues.

They point out in the report that it is estimated that at least

200,000 people are in gulags in North Korea today. The famine,

while it has abated a bit with some recent harvests, remains a serious

problem. Thirty-seven percent, I think, was the number I saw

of the children of North Korea who are malnourished.

We know that if you look at the xenophobic behavior of Kim

Jong-il and previously that of his father, they are living in a world

of fantasy, but it is a very dangerous fantasy, and it seems to me

that the more emphasis that is put on human rights, the more the

nuclear crisis abates over time—and I laud you for the efforts you

are doing, the Six-Party Talks, the conversations that Chris Hill

and others are having in Pyongyang, but it seems to me that while

we work that issue, the real way to create an atmosphere that

peace can take hold and the diminishment of this terrible threat

of nuclear weapons, first to South Korea and then to everywhere

else, will be to really robustly push the human rights issue and do

it now.

This report, I think, is an additional rallying call to the world

community to pay much more attention to the human rights issue,

and I know that we have—I know our State Department raises it

frequently. You know, I have read the country reports, International

Religious Freedom Act, and Ambassador Hanford raises it.

But we raise it through resolutions. We do it through hearings. But

I think this needs to be seen as the way, as the pathway to undermining

the threat of nuclear weapons, and you know this could be

done, I think, much more than it has been. So I would appreciate

your thoughts on it.

I appreciate it.

If I could just add, the report—and it just came out October 30—

does call for a United Nations Security Council resolution, and I

would hope that would be taken seriously under advisement. And

Jay Lefkowitz has been where you sit. Chairman Leach and I have

Co-Chaired hearings where he has testified. All of that is well and

good, but we need to get these other nations as well, I think, much

more engaged if we are to make progress.

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Leach.