Mr. Chairman, let me also say it has been a

great honor and privilege to serve with you. I, too, will miss you.

I look forward with great excitement to Chairman Lantos continuing

the leadership of this very, very important Committee.

Mr. Chairman, almost 6 years ago the Bush Administration’s internal

bickering and external dithering have wound up in producing

precisely the result that none of us wanted. On October 9,

with more fizzle than bang, North Korea announced that they, too,

had become members of the nuclear club. International condemnation

of the test was followed rapidly by a UN Security Council resolution

imposing sanctions on the North. But the consensus on an

international response evaporated almost immediately in disagreement

over the scope of inspecting North Korean cargo.

It is well past time for the President to cut to the chase. Those

inside the Administration that believe if we simply sanction, isolate

and pressure the North long enough they will collapse have misread

the situation from the beginning. North Korea’s obvious willingness

to defy its closest ally and largest provider of foreign aid

should be a clear signal to all concerned that Kim Jong-il thinks

he can survive the wave of international sanctions and still have

his bomb. Anyone who thinks otherwise need only look at Kim

Jong-il’s willingness to starve his own people as an object lesson

and just how far he will go to assure the survival of his regime.

It is now time for the Administration to stop outsourcing our foreign

policy to China and to negotiate directly with the North Koreans

to get them to abandon and dismantle their nuclear program,

because it is clear that the Chinese are not going to do it for us.

And notwithstanding the President’s view, negotiating directly

with North Korea did result in a freeze on North Korea’s ability to

reprocess at least plutonium for almost 10 years. Now that the

North has tested, the price they will expect will be even higher;

and it rises by the day.

A good place for the President to start would be to appoint a congressionally-

mandated coordinator for North Korea policy. I realize

the President still has a month to make this appointment, but

there is no reason to delay and every reason to move forward with

all deliberate speed, or we could just stop worrying and learn to

love the North Korean bomb.