Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Members of the

Committee. Thank you for inviting us here today to discuss the

human rights and humanitarian conditions facing North Koreans

and the implementation of the North Korean Human Rights Act.

As Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of

Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, I would like to report on the

specific activities carried out to date by my Bureau to implement

the act, and to underscore our longstanding commitment to the

promotion of human rights in North Korea.

We share congressional concern about the deplorable human

rights situation in North Korea, arguably the worst in the world

today. The United States, under the leadership of President Bush

and Congress, has made promoting freedom the bedrock of foreign

policy, and we hope that the appointment of a Special Envoy on

Human Rights in North Korea will greatly enhance our ongoing efforts

to address the plight of the citizens of North Korea.

The Department has made extensive preparations for the appointment

of a Special Envoy, and a Special Envoy will be appointed

shortly. The Secretary of State has determined that the

Special Envoy will be located in my Bureau, the Bureau of Democracy,

Human Rights and Labor. Office space, office budget, and

personnel slots have already been allocated.

In the meantime, we continue to raise awareness of the severity

of North Korean human rights abuses and to humanitarian issues

with the international community, both in multilateral and bilateral

fora. We regularly meet with nongovernmental organizations

and other concerned parties on North Korean issues, and will continue

our ongoing efforts to shine a spotlight on the serious human

rights problems in North Korea.

In particular, the Department has recently undertaken the following

activities: Administering a grant to Freedom House for

North Korean human rights conferences; administering a grant to

the National Endowment for Democracy to improve monitoring and

reporting on North Korean human rights by South Korean-based

NGOs; and co-sponsoring a U.N. Commission on Human Rights

Resolution on North Korea.

As you know, the Consolidated Appropriation Act of fiscal year

2005 appropriated $2 million for a grant to conduct an international

conference on human rights situation in North Korea. The

manager’s statement indicated that the grant should be administered

by Freedom House.

The Bureau expedited the processing of this grant and Freedom

House developed plans for a timely synchronized international advocacy

campaign dedicated to pressuring the North Korean regime

to end its abuses. Freedom House will hold three conferences in

2005 and early 2006, the first in Washington, the second in Europe,

and the third and final in Seoul, to internationalize the North

Korean human rights situation.

Each conference will feature the testimony of victims of the

North Korean regime, and high profile figures will be invited to address

the conferences. Freedom House will complement the conferences

with additional smaller, more targeted advocacy efforts.

In addition, the Bureau provided funding since 2001 to the National

Endowment for Democracy (NED) to improve and expand

monitoring and reporting of the human rights situation in North

Korea by NGOs based in South Korea. For fiscal year 2004, DRL

provided and added $350,000 toward this effort.

In awarding subgrants to South Korean NGOs, NED gave priority

to organizations conducting cutting-edge, in-depth research,

and to actual conditions inside North Korea, and producing professional,

credible reports.

At the 2005 session of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights,

the United States co-sponsored for the third time a resolution condemning

the North Korean regime’s deplorable human rights

record. The resolution called on the North Korean Government to

fulfill its obligations under human rights instruments to which it

is a party, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political

Rights.

Last year’s resolution led to the appointment of a U.N. Special

Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic

People’s Republic of Korea. To date, however, the regime has now

allowed the Special Rapporteur to enter North Korea.

We again urge the regime to take advantage of this opportunity

to cooperate with the international community on critical human

rights issues.

The resolution also called for free access to the country for humanitarian

organizations to monitor the distribution of food and

other aid. As President Bush noted when he signed into law the

North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004, North Korea remains one

of the most oppressive countries in the world and stands in dark

contrast to democratic governments elsewhere in Asia.

We will continue to work toward the day when the long-suffering

people of North Korea will enjoy the basic rights and freedoms that

are the true foundation of prosperity and strength in the world

community, and we expect that the forthcoming appointment of a

Special Envoy on Human Rights in North Korea will greatly enhance

our efforts.

I appreciate your time and attention to these issues which we all

agree must be resolved. The Department strongly supports the

North Korean Human Rights Act’s objectives. We welcome your

comments, questions and suggestions.

Yes, sir.

Implementation of the North Korean Human Rights

Act is a top priority for the Administration and for the Department.

My Bureau in particular is very enthusiastic that the Secretary has

designated DRL to house the Special Envoy. We have gone forward

on all the practical steps of finding office space, and allocating personnel

slots and a budget, and we are confident that an envoy will

be appointed and announced very soon.