Mr. President, I

believe this body is about to consider

and pass the North Korea Human

Rights Act and our amendment in the

nature of a substitute. It is cleared

through the House of Representatives

and is on our consent calendar. It is

about to clear through here, I believe,

and I am thankful to the Foreign Relations

Committee, the staff of the committee,

the chairman and ranking

member, for their work getting this

moved forward.

This is about the fundamental human

rights of the people of North Korea. It

is my hope that this will pass today—

and if not today, at least Monday.

It is no secret that North Korea policy

continues to be a matter of intense

debate at the highest levels of our Government

and governments around the

world. Reasonable people with good intentions

disagree vehemently on various

aspects of what an appropriate

North Korea policy should be.

This is why I am pleased that the

Senate, along with the House of Representatives,

will soon be able to come

together in unity and speak clearly on

one particular set of issues regarding

North Korea, and that is the most fundamental

rights, human rights, of the

people of North Korea, and to put that

in a policy position.

The people of North Korea have endured

some of the most horrendous assaults

on the inherent dignity of

human beings of any group of people in

the world. Inside North Korea, the totalitarian

dynasty of the Kim regime

permits no dissent and maintains an

inhumane system of prison camps that

houses an estimated 200,000 political inmates.

I have held a hearing on this. We

have had satellite photography. People

who have left the country have testified

about this system of gulags that

exists and is in operation today in 2004.

The regime strictly prohibits freedoms

of speech, press, religion, assembly,

and movement. Torture and execution,

often in public, are regular tools

of state control. Since the collapse of

the centralized agricultural system in

the 1990s, more than 2 million North

Koreans are estimated to have died of

starvation and related diseases. That is

nearly 10 percent of the total North

Korean population—over 2 million people.

North Koreans outside of North

Korea are also targets of abuse. Many

thousands are hiding inside China,

which currently refuses to allow the

U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees

to evaluate and identify genuine refugees

among the North Korean migrant

population. This is so even though

China is a signatory and has obligations

as a party to the U.N. Refugee

Convention.

China forcibly returns North Koreans

to North Korea where they routinely

face imprisonment and torture and

sometimes execution. The stories from

North Korean refugees who are able to

get out are absolutely horrific.

Inside China, North Korean women

and girls are particularly vulnerable to

trafficking and sexual exploitation. Recent

reports also indicate that chemical

and biological experiments are

going on in the country’s gulags inside

North Korea.

Let me explain what the bill does.

The bill promotes the human rights of

North Koreans by funding private, nonprofit

human rights and democracy

programs, increasing the availability

of nonstate-controlled sources of information

to North Koreans and U.S.

broadcasting into North Korea, urging

additional North Korea-specific actions

by the U.N. High Commission on Refugees

and by the U.N. Human Rights

Commission.

The bill promotes responsible assistance

to the North Korean people by increasing

funding for humanitarian assistance

to North Koreans outside

North Korea. This would include refugees,

orphans, widows, and trafficking

victims.

The bill endorses U.S. support for

providing humanitarian aid inside

North Korea but conditioning increases

over current levels upon significant

improvements in transparency, access,

and monitoring. To date, we have had

no transparency; very little monitoring

has been able to take place of the humanitarian

aid we have provided to

North Korea. It conditions future direct

aid to the North Korean Government

on substantial progress on human

rights and transparency benchmarks.

Let me elaborate a little bit on this

final point. In an AP story this morning

that ran in the Kansas City Star,

appearing in many papers across the

country, the headline reads: ‘‘North

Korea Asking for More Foreign Aid.’’

The article quotes an NGO official that

the North Korean Government wants

not only additional humanitarian aid

but also technical assistance and developmental

cooperation.

At the same time, we have stories

and information from Secretary of

State Colin Powell warning North

Korea against conducting a new missile

test.

It would be naive for us to think that

North Korea was not making a connection

between the two. That is, if aid is

not forthcoming, they will test new

missiles. If that is not blackmail, I

don’t know what is. This bill will make

it clear that as a matter of U.S. policy,

we will not give in to those threats.

At the same time, I doubt that anyone

in this body would oppose providing

aid if there were assurances that

the distribution and use of such aid

were conditioned on substantial improvement

in human rights and transparency

benchmarks, that NGOs would

get complete access to vulnerable populations,

that such aid would be clearly

marked and targeted for children and

people in need and not the North Korean

military apparatus, and that the

North Korean Government demonstrates

that it is cooperating with

NGOs.

The bill additionally protects refugees

by clarifying U.S. policy toward

North Korean refugees, and the eligibility

of North Koreans for U.S. asylum

and refugee processing; urging the U.N.

High Commission for Refugees to use

all available means to gain access and

provide assistance to North Koreans in

China; and seeking solutions to North

Korea’s lack of access to refugee protections.

As amended, the bill also asks the

President to appoint a special envoy

for human rights in North Korea, a person

of high distinction. We have in

mind someone such as former Senator

John Danforth, now the U.N. Representative

for the United States to

the U.N., who was so instrumental in

bringing together the north/south

peace accords in Sudan.

In addition, the bill requires a number

of reports that will keep the issue

of human rights front and center so

that even as we continue to seek a resolution

to the nuclear issue, which we

should, that this matter of human

rights is not swept under the carpet

and that the matter of human rights

does not become a mere afterthought.

For too long, we have challenged

rogue regimes on such fundamental

issues and values as freedom of

thought, religion, assembly, and press

to back down now. We are not going to.

We are going to continue to challenge

rogue regimes, such as North Korea, on

how they treat their own people.

As experience has taught us, during

the Cold War and the battle over ideas

during that period, these are some of

the most effective ways in which we

can promote freedom: open and democratic

institutions within these countries.

Recently, a leading member of South

Korea’s Congress said to me in my office

that North Koreans fear the West’s

criticism of its human rights more

than any criticism about its nuclear

program. North Korea will throw up all

kinds of bluster when it comes to their

threat as a potential nuclear power,

but if you engage them on human

rights, they become silent because even

they know they cannot hide from the

shame of the crimes they have committed

against their own people.

With this bill, the regime in

Pyongyang will now have to answer for

itself in multiparty talks or any other

setting on such matters as the gulags,

chemical experiments on human

beings, the denial of food and deliberate

policies of starvation as a political

tool, and a thousand other ways

they violated human rights by which

this regime in Pyongyang maintains

its tenuous hold on power.

I know some were concerned about

the impact of the bill, but the bill does

not tie the hands of the President and

ongoing negotiations over North Korean

nuclear activities. Rather, I believe

this bill will strengthen our negotiating

position.

As I said at the outset, I thank the

chairman of the Foreign Relations

Committee and the ranking member,

Chairman LUGAR and Ranking Member

BIDEN, and their staff for their assistance

in getting this bill to the floor.

Hopefully, as I said, it will clear on

Monday.

I thank the International Relations

Committee, Chairman LEACH of the

Asia Pacific subcommittee and his

staff, Jamie McCormick and Doug Anderson.

Both Chairman HYDE and Congressman

LANTOS were critical in securing

a bipartisan consensus in getting

this bill to the floor in the House.

I also recognize Peter Yeo of Mr.

LANTOS’ staff and Sean Woo of my staff

for the tremendous work in getting

this moving forward.

There is a humanitarian crisis in

North Korea, a human rights crisis,

and I believe on a humanitarian basis,

we are seeing in places such as North

Korea and the Sudan a use of a humanitarian

tool to maintain power and, in

the process, people are dying and being

killed.

Countries such as North Korea and

Sudan have created an axis of death on

their own people. This should not be,

and it should not be allowed to take

place in this world today. We need to

stand up for the human dignity of

every person, wherever they are located

in the world.

The North Korea Human Rights Act

highlights this problem and establishes

a position for this country that hopefully

will be a model position for many

countries around the world in dealing

with the human rights tragedy inside

North Korea.

I thank the Members of this body for

allowing this presentation. I yield the

floor and suggest the absence of a

quorum.