Mr. President, I thank

the majority leader for the time and

also my chairman from Alaska, Senator

MURKOWSKI, for permitting me to

speak during this time.

I rise to address an issue of critical

importance to our national security:

containing the proliferation of weapons

of mass destruction by North Korea. As

ranking member of the Subcommittee

on International Security, Proliferation,

and Federal Services, I see this as

one of the most pressing security

issues facing America. The Clinton administration

has been working hard at

containing and countering this threat,

holding important discussions with the

North Koreans, most recently in Berlin.

Last Friday, a North Korean

spokesman stated that North Korea

would ‘‘not launch a missile while the

talks are underway with a view to creating

an atmosphere more favorable for

the talks’’ with the United States.

This, I believe, is a very positive

step. North Korea’s development and

August 1998 testing of a long-range

missile drew America’s attention to

this emerging threat to our national

security. Even more directly, it raised

concerns about Hawaii’s security. Following

this test, the North Koreans

began preparing to launch a second

missile, which our intelligence analysts

believe could deliver a severalhundred

kilogram payload to Hawaii

and to Alaska. North Korean preparations

to test launch a much larger missile

prompted the administration to

take multilateral efforts to persuade

the North Koreans not to launch and to

restrict their missile development.

Following negotiations in Berlin between

the United States and the North

Koreans last week, the President announced

his decision to ease some sanctions

against North Korea administered

under the Trading with the

Enemy Act, the Defense Production

Act, and the Department of Commerce’s

Export Administration regulations.

So far these efforts have been

partially successful, and the North Koreans

have agreed to a moratorium on

missile launches during this series of

talks with the United States. The administration

is to be congratulated for

the intensity with which it has pursued

a solution to this dangerous problem.

There has been some criticism of the

administration’s approach, with a few

critics arguing that the administration

is rewarding bad behavior or giving in

to extortion demands. I do not believe

this is the case. The formal announcement

by the North Korean Government

stating there would be no missile tests

while talks are underway with the

United States is a clear indication that

North Koreans have accepted the new

approach in relations outlined by Secretary

Perry. There is no doubt that

the North Koreans have an active missile

export program which is dependent

upon imports of foreign technology and

exports of cruise missiles.

Therefore, it is in our national security

interest to limit North Korean

missile development and especially

North Korean missile exports toward

which the Berlin agreement takes a

firm step. By lifting some economic

sanctions, holding out the possibility

of lifting additional sanctions, and suggesting

to the North Koreans that the

United States is willing to normalize

relations with North Korea, the North

Koreans have been given a powerful incentive

towards agreeing to a permanent

moratorium on missile development.

Reimposing sanctions would

send such a strong signal of distrust

with North Korean actions that it

could well set back North Korean efforts

to achieve international respectability

to lower levels than those

today.

This is not a sanctions relief for moratorium

deal. It leads, instead, to a

normalization of relations for a reduction

in threat. Normalization is predicated

upon North Korean willingness

to change their behavior in terms of

terrorism, drug dealing, and proliferation,

including a verifiable end to their

nuclear warhead and missile programs.

We are not looking at an immediate

end to the hostile atmosphere that has

worsened tensions on the Korean peninsula.

We must determine what our

long-term objectives are on the Korean

peninsula. If our ultimate goal is the

peaceful unification of the Koreas as

one democratic state, we need to assess

more effectively how our current strategy

will lead us in that direction.

I look forward to the administration’s

elaborating its next steps towards

North Korea. So far, the administration

has worked hard and well at

containing tensions on the peninsula.

It is not a success which must come

easily, given the difficulty of dealing

with the North Koreans. More hard

work and the support of Congress will

be needed to make a lasting peace possible.

I yield the floor and thank the Senator

from Alaska for granting me this

time.