I thank Chairman Lugar and Senator Biden for holding this important hearing,

and I thank Assistant Secretary Kelly, Mr. DeTrani, and all of the private witnesses

for being here today.

It seems that every few months, we have another hearing focused on North Korea

and the North Korean pursuit of nuclear weapons. Each hearing is a reminder of

how serious this issue is. Each hearing is an opportunity. to reflect on North Korea’s

alarming history of proliferation. And as time passes between each hearing, North

Korea has increasing opportunities to develop its nuclear weapons program, and potentially

to provide nuclear know-how or technology to others. Yet, as time passes,

it is not at all clear that the United States gains any particular negotiating leverage.

What is fundamentally different about the situation in North Korea today as opposed

to the situation in North Korea a year ago—besides the likelihood that the

North Koreans now possess more nuclear weapons? North Korea’s nuclear defiance

is an urgent national security issue. But since October of 2002, the administration

has failed to effectively address this problem, and I believe has failed to make this

issue the priority that it should be. I hope that the last round of talks created some

new momentum, but given the gravity of the situation before us and the amount

of time that has passed, I am not satisfied with the faint wisps of fragile hope to

be found in the latest rhetoric. I am interested in concrete progress that advances

our security.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good to see you

again, Secretary Kelly.

We have been dealing with this aspect of this issue for over a

year and a half now. I wonder if you could just say a little bit about

what good time does for us. Is it not the case that as time passes,

North Korea could be adding to its nuclear arsenal? And what do

you see as any additional leverage that the United States gains as

time passes?

Are you confident that North Korea cannot

transfer nuclear capacity or know-how to other actors while we

wait for the next round of talks, Mr. Secretary? On what would you

base that confidence?

I assume that part of the North Korean strategy

at these talks is to drive a wedge between other parties at the

talks. How do they try to do this? Have they had any success at

it? You could interpret the bilateral efforts of South Korea and

Japan to suggest that they may have had some success in this regard.

Could you comment on that?

Thank you.

Finally, how do North Korean officials react when human rights

issues are raised, if you would characterize their reaction to discussion

of these issues for me?