Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for being here. I agree with the chairman,

we always say we have a distinguished panel, but I think you are

a distinguished panel. And I cannot think of three people that it

is better to hear from today than the three of you on this issue.

Let me begin by saying to you that I have no idea, and I have

some skepticism about whether or not an initiated bilateral discussion

will produce anything, so I am not one, nor do I know are any

of you, nor is the chairman, one who thinks that merely by talking

there is a resolution. But I am convinced that there is no option

other than talking at this point.

The President is in a very difficult place right now. A lot of his

critics are suggesting that his preoccupation with Iraq, his preoccupation

with this, that, or the other thing, is the reason why he

is not moving. I think it is because—that all may be true, but I do

not think that is the central point. The central point is there are

not many options on the table here. But what disturbs me is we

seem to have no policy.

The initial policy that has been proffered as a good idea, there

should be multilateral discussions, and a multilateral umbrella, I

think, is the way it was phrased by the Secretary, under which to

have serious discussions with the North Koreans. Holding up that

umbrella would be Russia, China, Japan, and South Korea, along

with us. And that is obviously, in my view, obviously, the preferred

course. The problem is no one else wants to get under the umbrella.

No one else is willing to sponsor or participate in that forum.

Now, I can understand the administration up to now, up to the

Secretary of State’s visit to the region last week, saying that, not

giving up on that option. But I do not know how anyone can draw

any solace from anything that happened on that visit of the Secretary

of State. And I ask myself in trying to figure out what is

going on, why are the Chinese, because it is clearly in the Chinese

interest and the interest of the Chinese to have North Korea cease

and desist, it is clearly against their interest for the Korean Peninsula

to become nuclearized, which is what many of you have said

and others have said and I have said, that it is a probable outcome

over the next year or so or more if North Korea continues on this,

hellbent on increasing their nuclear capability and stockpile.

And so I ask myself, why is it that the Chinese will not be more

aggressive? Whether they could succeed or not is another question,

but they clearly have the most leverage over North Korea. Why is

it that the Russians seem almost to be mute on this subject? And

the South Koreans, I understand, they have several hundred thousand

people at stake if this goes wrong.

Now, I get to the point where I wonder: What are the U.S. options,

if the multilateral option is not an option? And I am told that

we are still pursuing that option. We are still pushing diplomatically.

But if it is not an option, it seems to me there are only three

options and you could catagorize them in different ways I am sure,

but my rough calculation is there is either, on the one hand, one

option, war, or relent; in other words, the North Koreans blink.

They are fearful that diplomatically, politically, militarily, economically

they will be damaged, more damaged if they continue on this

course and they will cease and desist, or war.

The second option is on our part, it appears to me, is resignation

and containment. We resign to the fact that they are going to have

*x* number of additional nuclear weapons or amounts of plutonium

that is potentially available for export, but we believe we can contain

it. Listening to President Bush yesterday, it sounds like for

the first time, in a vocal way, he has raised one option, war, more

vocally, and two, the second option, containment, in terms of na-

tional missile defense. As I read his statement in this morning’s

paper, he talked about, in this long interview, what we have to do

is we have to get to national missile defense.

The third option is a negotiated deal, a potential option. But you

have got to talk to get to that option, if it is an option. And as I

examine this, it seems that everyone knows—it is sort of like the

Middle East; everyone knows in the Middle East that any final

deal is going to have to be no more settlements and no right of return.

I mean, you know, there are certain things that everybody

knows is going to have to be part of a final deal.

Well, if there is a negotiated deal, if that is possible—and, again,

I want to say I am not at all sure it is possible. But if there is a

negotiated deal, it will have to have two pieces, everybody knows.

One is that the North Koreans will have to cease and desist from

their nuclear program, as well as their rocket program, as well as

their missile program. And I would hope, and if there were any

such deal, and also from being the exporters, proliferators to the

world. But the other side of that deal means that there would have

to be some commitment relative to North Korean security in that

we would not—regime change would be off the table, which leads

me to my concluding point. As I have tried to figure this out as to

why there is no policy now, it seems to me the policy—and this,

I am going to ask you to speak to this and you may not want to.

You may say, ‘‘I just do not know, Joe, so I don’t want to speak to it at all.’’

But it seems to me, this lack of a policy seems to be a reflection

of a split within the administration between those who see as the

ultimate objective in North Korea regime change, and those who

see—as a primary objective, and those who see as the primary objective

as getting the cease, desist, bottle up, and end their weapons programs here.

But you cannot have both in all probability. You are not going

to get a negotiated deal where they agree to regime change and no

weapons of mass—no nuclear program or missile program.

And so it takes me to the next point, and I just want you to, you

know, think out loud with me when we get to the question period

because that is what I am doing with you. I have thought a lot

about this. Why would not the Chinese act more reasonably in

their own self-interest here? Well, my staff, experts in my staff, tell

me, well, they are worried about population flows. They are worried

about significant migration. They are worried—all legitimate.

I do not think that is the reason. I think the reason is they know

they are going to be given a choice. They can sign on, I think, if

they knew for sure we were talking about elimination of weapons.

But they cannot sign on to regime change. They cannot be the only

Communist nation left in the world taking on the only other Communist

dictator in the world in terms of regime change. So I think

that is the reason why we have had no traction with the Chinese

that I am aware of, none.

This new vaulted relationship we are talking about, the new

vaulted relationship with Putin and the Russians, no traction that I can see.

Now, maybe there is something going on, back channels, that I

am going to wake up tomorrow morning and be surprised and elat-

ed about, but I do not see anything. And so, the inability to get

China to move, the inability to get them to act in what everyone

would acknowledge, and what they acknowledge privately, is in

their own self-interest, it seems to me is cabined by our inability

in this administration to resolve a policy. And what is the policy?

Is the policy—which it was, Secretary Carter, when you were Assistant

Secretary, of many of those who were in the administration,

although it was split even then. Of some of those in the administration,

it was, ‘‘You are making a mistake in anything having to

do with these discussions in this Agreed Framework, because we

are appeasing and we are prolonging the administration of the North.’’

I mean, that is the ideological—or maybe that is the wrong word.

That is the policy disagreement. That was at the root of why the

criticism of the Agreed Framework bubbled up from 1994 on. And

yet you have other people in the administration who signed on a

report, both those who are viewed as far right and those viewed as

centrist or whatever, however you want to call it, both in the State

Department and in the Defense Department who are there now,

who signed on to a report saying that, ‘‘You have got to talk. You

have got to work out an agreement.’’

And so my opening statement is more almost a plaintive plea for

some enlightenment of whether or not my deducing as to how we

got to where we are and why we do not have a policy is correct,

because I do not know how to figure this out. I do not know how

to approach this unless I can get a handle on how I think the administration—

what is the impediment? It cannot be merely that we

want to prove that we are tough guys and we are not going to be

blackmailed. It cannot be that alone, because the war option is not

a credible option as long as our chief ally, South Korea, says, ‘‘We

are not in the deal.’’ And so I would like to talk about those things.

And I would like to ask unanimous consent that my formal opening

statement be placed in the record.

But that is what I hope we can get into a little bit, at least in

my questioning period with the three of you. Thank you.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I truly appreciate the three of you and your testimony. And there

may be slightly different emphasis in priorities, but all of you end

up at the same place basically, and coming from three such distinguished

people, I hope people are listening beyond this room.

And I want to make it clear in case my mother is watching:

Mom, if you get up to walk away from the television, I was not one

of the guys who said, ‘‘My mother wants it both ways.’’ It was not me.

So I want the record to show that in case she was walking away

and heard that phrase and thought maybe I used it——

I am not going to identify the gentleman, Mom,

who said it, but it wasn’t me. I know you never want it both ways.

There is an irony here, it seems to me, and I think maybe there

is an opportunity as well. The irony to me is that—and I am not

connecting the two in Iraq and North Korea in terms of what the

solutions to each are, but the irony is here: The administration has

made a very compelling case, at least home, that containment is

not an option with regard to the much less or least dangerous foe,

Saddam Hussein, but containment—at least the signal being sent

is containment may be an option with regard to the foe that is capable

of doing much more severe damage to us short-term, longterm,

and interim-term in my view.

And it seems to me ironically, if we were to move in the direction

the three of you suggest with regard to North Korea, it may have

some ancillary benefits beyond what we may find out and what our

options may be in clarifying our situation with regard to North

Korea. And that is that I think part of the problem is we tend to—

and those of you who are genuine regional experts, as well as strategists,

we tend sometimes—I am not suggesting that you do this,

but we up here tend not to connect the dots. We tend to think that

we can have clearly enunciated positions on one set of policies and

even if they are at odds with a set of principles stated or enunciated

in a second set of concerns we have, and they do not necessarily—

as if people only read in time zones.

And so my problem is with the failure to understand that a precondition

to enhancing our prospects of success in whatever action

we take, diplomatically, militarily, economically, in any way, is

that we have to demonstrate we are willing to talk. It is a pre-condition.

I do not know what we lose; I do not know what we lose

by talking, even though I do not think any of the five of us or the

six of us here are particularly optimistic that we would get a result

as a consequence of those talks that would lead to a complete cessation

of concern here.

So what I would like you to expand on a little bit for me if you

are willing to, is: What do you think is the root of this? What is

the root of the present position adopted by the administration, a refusal

to talk other than in a forum that the rest of the participants

indicate they will not participate in, so it is not the table?

What is at the root of that? I mean, what could be—not that you

know specifically, but I mean go through it, analyze for me: What

are the possible lines of reasoning that would lead one to conclude

that we do not talk at all? Is it because they truly believe we can

contain? I mean, do you think that is it? Or do you think it is because

they think if we do not talk, North Korea will blink and accommodate

what we want done anyway? Or is it because they

think there is going to be a breakthrough diplomatically, not with

North Korea, but with South Korea and China and Japan?

I mean, what are the—give me the positions. If you were making

the case not to talk, what are the arguments you make that have

any credibility?

I realize that it is not your position. I just wanted—

I am trying to figure this out.

Bilateral discussions, let me be precise. We are

all—you all are saying there is no option at this moment but bilateral

discussions. You may have an ancillary discussion going on,

you may have a large room, we may be in a—everybody may be

in a big hotel and we are in a small room with a—you know, that

is all—but there is a flat, so far, refusal by the President of the

United States to say he is prepared to talk one on—not necessarily

‘‘he,’’ but his negotiators, one on one with the North Koreans, not-

withstanding with what Mr. Armitage said, who was severely rebuked

for having said what he said before our committee.

Well, he can handle it—— But I am just saying he was severely rebuked.

So we all agree on that. I assume that that has

to be done. I mean, I assume that or at least I know from the

South Korean position, because I have spoken to them, and I assume

from the Japanese and Chinese position that they are prepared

to work out with us as we seek a common approach, but that

they are not prepared to set the modality as you guys use the—

you know, it is kind of a foreign policy phrase; the American people

wonder why we make everything sound so complicated—you know,

the shape of the table, they do not want to sit down at the table

initially, with us at the table and the North Koreans.

They want to sit down with us at the table; they are prepared

to sit down with us now and talk about what they think about

whatever our enunciated policy is and try to work out something,

but they are not prepared to go to Pyongyang or some hotel in Hawaii

or in Tokyo, whatever, to sit down with us in the same room.

They are saying, ‘‘Go talk first.’’ Is that not what they are saying?

At what point do you say, knowing the clock is

ticking, going to the reprocessing, ‘‘They are not with me. They are

not going to do it’’? Now, we are into the situation that the Senator,

that the chairman talked about where our interests are different;

or our judgments are different, if not interest.

Do we say, ‘‘OK. They are not with us. They are not going to sit

down with us. They are not willing to come up with a common

strategy,’’ whatever—however you want to characterize it? At what

point do we say—with the clock ticking toward reprocessing, the

possibility of reprocessing, at what point do we say, ‘‘Well, we are

going to do it alone’’?

I mean I thought you guys, all three, are saying, ‘‘It is time to

talk.’’

So I am trying to figure it out. I mean, is the decision you think

that they think they can contain, that this administration thinks

they can contain North Korea? Have some adopted the position

that the South Koreans have, that this is not that fundamentally

different if they have six more nuclear weapons? I mean, what—

yes, please.

Oh, my time is up.

What is their reasoning?

Thank you.

Mr. Chairman.

On that point, if we could just expand while we

are on the point—and the time is not up on the Senator here, so

if I may.

My staff points out that they in effect did advertise.

They hinted at a cruise missile test. They have criticized our

surveillance flights before they acted. Now they are publicly criticizing

our upcoming military exercises.

So I would not be surprised if the next step is, since they advertised

it, a conventional military provocation such as moving their

mechanized forces up, seeing them move; because the interesting

thing to me, and I may be misreading it, and it is—my staffer is

an expert on Korea and not me. But what they did, do you agree

that they did in each of these provocative non-nuclear steps, advertise

ahead of time in a sense that they raised the issued publicly?

I mean, is there any connection there, Ash, do you think?

No, I understand that, and I am not saying that

we do not do the exercises. I am not suggesting that we do not do

the overflights. I was just trying to get a sense into what the Senator,

what the chairman was asking about.

Anticipate the next step so we do not overreact.

I mean, you know, so that we figure it out. Anyway, thanks for letting

me——

That you cannot tell, yes.

That is a valid point, and thank you.

In running the risk of trespassing on everybody’s

time too much, I have two questions and I will cease and desist.

And again, I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your testimony

and how enlightening it is.

In a discussion several weeks ago with an administration official

who is in a significant position, and I was pressing the case in a

private conversation that you have got to talk. This particular person

said basically, I agree. We have to talk, but we have plenty of

time, Joe. We have plenty of time, and went on to suggest two

things. And I want to make it clear because he is already in

enough trouble: I am not talking about Secretary Armitage, and I

am really not. It was not Secretary Armitage.

But it has been said, No. 1, ‘‘I think they will blink,’’ that is the

North Koreans. And two, ‘even if they restart the reprocessing facility,

we still have time.’’

Now, I assume what he meant by that is if reprocessing started

tomorrow, if we got up from this—if as we walked out, the press

grabbed us and said, ‘‘They have just announced they have started

and we have confirmed they have started the reprocessing facility,’’

that it is going to be a month or so before the first baseball-size

piece of plutonium, not piece, but a chunk of plutonium is available.

First of all, from a scientific standpoint, to use a colloquial kind

of term here, is that true? From the moment they start it, how

much time is there before there is a product that is able to be, if

they wish to, transported to some other part of the world against

our interests?

Now, so my second question is that, when I come

back to where I began—and I realize this is not your responsibility,

and I realize that it is not something that any of you are comfortable

with, so I am not going to ask you to pursue it again, but

I keep coming back to trying to figure out—let me back up.

Let us assume, and I think most of us assume in varying degrees,

that there is some disagreement within the administration

on what policy to pursue. Otherwise, there would be a clear definition

and they have not been stated by now. At least that is my assumption.

And so the reason why I—just so you do not think I am

just engaged in a sort of an unusual exercise here of trying to divine

what the motivation is, but it is to try to figure out, quite

frankly, to the very limited degree I have any influence and to a

larger degree that the chairman may and other senior Republicans,

is how to weigh-in internally, not publicly.

I have no interest in seeing a public debate and disagreement between

me as a Democrat and a spokesperson in part at least for

foreign policy for my party, and the President. That is not a useful

thing in my view. That is not something I am looking to have happen.

So I just want to—as by way of background, I think you all

understand this, but if anybody’s listening, what my motivation

here is. And I for one do not think at this point, it is particularly

relevant whether or not statements by the administration or failure

to pursue the Agreed Framework has got us to where we are. We

are where we are.

And so I have to make sure I understand one thing from two

very seasoned, serious negotiators, among other things, in two different

administrations and one very seasoned and significant strategist

as well as negotiator, whether the premise upon which I am

basing my attempt to seek an answer to what is going on downtown

is correct. And that is: Is it, as I have perceived it to be, correct

that no matter how you dice it or slice it, that there is no negotiated

end to this rush to nuclear weapons and long-range missiles

that does not contain an acknowledgment on our part that regime

change is not our policy? In other words, can you think of any circumstances—

you are seasoned negotiators. You sit down across the

table and as they say, to get to yes you have to figure out—you either

have to figure out how to take advantage of a very stupid adversary

and get everything so, like your mom, Mr. Kanter, you get

both.

I did. That was lousy of me; I apologize.

But seriously, you either have to assume that. Or you have to figure

out: What do you believe to be the bottom line for them in

terms of a minimum requirement in order for them to get into a

deal? And so, it is in that context I ask the question.

Do you believe that the minimum, the drop-dead position that

needs to be met, assuming they met all of our needs, the drop-dead

position from the North Korean side is you guys foreswear regime

change. You guys, in some form, like an executive agreement, a

multilateral agreement, a treaty or whatever the heck they may

want to talk about it, how they want to talk about it, but the bottom

line is they would have to be convinced that we have, at least

for the time being, foresworn active efforts to bring down their regime.

Am I right about that?

It is not sufficient necessarily.

No, I understand, but without that——

Ash?

OK. Because I——

Yes.

No, I understand. I was trying to——

Well, I would argue, quite frankly, it would be

totally consistent with the remainder of our policy. This administration,

the last administration engaged China. Nobody in this administration,

no one in the last administration, no one in the previous

administration is happy with the fact that there is still a

minimum oligarchy and a dictatorship there where human rights

are being violated, but we have concluded, we have made—we have

reached at what we are always searching for here, a bipartisan

consensus that goes well beyond the Congress, that the key to dealing

with China now and in the future is engagement, and the underlying

principal that Democrats, Republicans, liberals, conservatives,

everyone shares who shares that view is that the very engagement

will be, the very exposure to the world will be the very

thing that will undermine this human-rights-abusing regime that

we do not like.

So I would argue that it is totally consistent. It does not mean

if we foreswear the use of military force and a regime change, we

are not going to, by totally peaceful means of engaging, have as our

objective the end of a repressive regime in the region. But I just

want to make sure, because I have found—I have never in the

seven Presidents I have served with, I have never found as large

a segment of any other administration being driven by, to put the

best spin on it, a pure ideological perspective, as pure an ideological

perspective on how the world should be moving now, as I have

with this administration. And it is not a majority. I am not talking

about—I am not talking about the President of the United States,

and I sincerely am not. But the President is getting advice, and I

am trying to figure out—well, I have already stated what I am trying

to figure out, and I am not sure even if I figure it out, it is particularly

relevant to the outcome. But it would sure as heck make

me feel a little better knowing what, well, what it was that had we

had to do and had to be helpful to do, or what we should refrain

from doing up here to get the administration to the clear enunciation

of a policy that—and I do not think we have a lot of time,

and I know you do not either.

Thank you all very much.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your indulgence.