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**Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
Assessing the North Korea Threat and U.S. Policy  
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**Introduction**

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me today, along with my colleague Ambassador Bob King, to testify about North Korea. We appreciate the interest and attention you have given to this critical challenge.

**DPRK Behavior**

This year, as we mark 70 years since the end of World War II and celebrate the tremendous progress the Asia-Pacific region has seen over the past seven decades, we are reminded how sadly different the last 70 years have been for the people of North Korea. North Koreans continue to suffer under a government that makes choices contrary to their interests – choices that pose a threat to North Korea’s neighbors and the international community.

The DPRK continues to violate its commitments and international obligations, and continues to pursue nuclear weapons and their means of delivery as a strategic national priority – all at the cost of the well-being of its own people and while perpetrating horrific human rights abuses against them.

**U.S. Policy**

Holding North Korea responsible for its own choices does not mean just waiting and hoping the regime will one day come to its senses. We are committed to using the full range of tools – deterrence, diplomacy, and pressure – to make clear that North Korea will not achieve security or prosperity while it pursues nuclear weapons, abuses its own people, and flouts its longstanding obligations and commitments.

North Korea’s bad behavior has earned no benefits from the United States. Instead, we have tightened sanctions and consistently underscored to the DPRK that the path to a brighter future for North Korea begins with authentic and credible negotiations that produce concrete denuclearization steps.

## **Deterrence**

Part of our effort to change North Korea's strategic calculus means leaving no doubt that the United States stands ready to defend our interests and our allies from the North Korean threat and have made it a priority to strengthen and modernize our alliances for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In this, we could have no better partners than our allies and friends in Seoul and Tokyo.

## **Pressure**

As we maintain the strongest possible deterrence capabilities, we have also increased the costs to the DPRK of its destructive policy choices by applying sustained pressure on the regime, both multilaterally and unilaterally.

In January the President issued a new Executive Order giving us important, powerful, broad new sanctions tools. From the day it was introduced, we began using this Executive Order to sanction wrongdoers in the DPRK regime. And we will continue to use this new tool, along with our other sanctions authorities. In July the Treasury Department announced new sanctions and updated our listings for previous North Korean sanctions targets to make it harder for them to hide behind aliases and front companies.

Our financial sanctions are always more effective when supported by our partners, and so we've also focused on strengthening multilateral sanctions against North Korea. Last year, we led efforts at the UN to sanction North Korea's major global shipping firm, and we have stepped up coordination with partners to ensure the sanction was enforced. Since then, this designated firm's ships have been denied port entry, scrapped, impounded, or confined to their home ports in North Korea, and the shipping firm has lost its contracts with many foreign-owned ships. This means the DPRK pays a real cost for its maritime proliferation.

We will continue to press for robust implementation of UN sanctions and enhanced vigilance against the DPRK's proliferation activities worldwide.

## **Diplomacy**

Equally important is North Korea's political isolation, driven by the overwhelming international consensus that North Korea cannot fully participate in the international community until it abides by its obligations and commitments. We have built and maintained that consensus through our active, principled diplomacy.

That diplomacy begins with our partners in the Six-Party Talks: South Korea, Japan, China, and Russia. Our coordination ensures that wherever Pyongyang turns, it hears a strong, unwavering message that it must live up to its international obligations, and that the path to a brighter future begins with credible negotiations and concrete denuclearization steps.

That principled stance also undergirds the attempts each of the Five Parties has made to engage North Korea directly: When we offer to meet directly with the North Koreans during my travel to the region... when South Korean President Park strives to improve inter-Korean relations... when Japan seeks an accounting of its abducted citizens... and even in China and Russia's dealings with the North – all Five Parties have consistently underscored the imperative of denuclearization. And, together, we continue to call on North Korea to refrain from any actions that would raise tensions in the region or threaten international peace and security.

We also have made clear to North Korea that the path of engagement and credible negotiations remains open.

## **Human Rights**

Ambassador King will brief you on one other piece of our active diplomacy on North Korea: our work to amplify victim's voices, to sustain the international community's attention on the suffering of the North Korean people, and to hold the regime to account for its abuses.

## **Conclusion**

Mr. Chairman, sending a strong, clear message holding North Korea accountable to its commitments and international obligations requires a sustained, international effort. We and our partners are engaged in that effort every day through our active deterrence, pressure, and diplomacy.

I thank the Committee for the opportunity to appear today. I am happy to answer your questions.