

Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Hearing on North Korea
Opening Statement by Senator Richard G. Lugar
June 11, 2009

Opening Statement for Hearing on North Korea

U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Republican leader Dick Lugar made the following statement at today's hearing:

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing to review the present situation in North Korea.

Recent provocative actions by North Korea are moving that country toward even greater isolation. Almost universally, the international community has condemned North Korea's nuclear test, missile launches, detention of American reporters, and bellicose remarks.

There is wide speculation about the motivations for North Korea's behavior. Some observers point to dynamics within North Korea surrounding the eventual leadership transition of Chairman Kim Jong Il. They suggest that an array of top security service officials and military leaders are positioning themselves in the transition intrigue by pressing for hard-line actions - from threatening to shoot down aircraft, to stopping the distribution of American food aid by NGOs and the World Food Program.

Regardless of motivations, North Korea has been engaging in a new level of international provocation. It is urgent that the United States and its partners develop policies that are clear and consistent. We should be willing to engage the North Koreans, but there must be much greater certainty that provocative steps by Pyongyang will result in predictable and meaningful consequences for the North Korean regime.

I support a full review of U.S. policy toward North Korea. Secretary Clinton has said that the Administration is considering all options in responding to North Korea's latest actions. I look forward to hearing additional details about this review from Ambassador Bosworth.

A number of points should be considered by the Administration as it develops a North Korea strategy. Did the lack of a strong, unified, and persistent response by China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, and the United States to past provocative actions by North Korea factor into Pyongyang's decision to proceed with the latest nuclear test?

Do North Korean officials believe their country's relationships with Iran or Syria will be permitted to develop without consequence if those relationships include cooperation on weapons of mass destruction?

What is the nature of the cargo in North Korean planes and ships arriving in Burma, which is sometimes a transit point for further global destinations? Russia has been transparent in its cooperation with Burma in the development of a nuclear reactor, reportedly for medical research purposes. Is North Korea contributing to the development of Burma's nuclear program, and if so, in what way?

What level of international cooperation exists to scrutinize North Korea's global trading network and its potential proliferation role, and can such cooperation be improved?

Is there a clear understanding of the efficacy and current status of agreements related to the Six Party Talks and North Korea's nuclear program? In essence, would any new negotiations be starting from square one?

The United States and China have cooperated closely in the Six Party process, but our priorities are not identical with regard to North Korea. While the United States is focused on eliminating North Korea's

nuclear weapons program, China's primary concern relates to regional stability, a point not lost on North Korean officials. Given recent provocations, have prospects for more concerted Chinese action been improved?

To facilitate the broadest possible base of support for moving ahead, I encourage Obama Administration officials to actively consult with the Congress as they proceed in developing a comprehensive North Korea strategy.

I join with Chairman Kerry in welcoming Ambassador Stephen Bosworth, Victor Cha, Nancy Lindborg, Evans Revere, and Leon Sigal to today's hearing. We look forward to their insights.

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