

Commission on Security & Cooperation in Europe: U.S. Helsinki Commission

**Resolving Crises in East Asia through a New System of Collective Security:
The Helsinki Process as a Model**

**Committee Members Present:
Senator Benjamin Cardin (D-MD)**

**Witnesses:
Carl Gershman,
President,
National Endowment for Democracy**

**Karin Lee,
Executive Director,
National Committee on North Korea**

**Frank Jannuzi,
Deputy Executive Director,
Amnesty International**

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in SD-106 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C.,
Senator Benjamin Cardin (D-MD), Chairman, CSCE, Presiding**

Wednesday, December 11, 2013

CARDIN: Let me welcome you all to the Helsinki Commission hearing. I want to apologize for the change in time. The hearing was originally scheduled to start at 2:00. We're starting at 1:00 because there will be a briefing today on the Iranian sanction agreement and there is tremendous interest that all senators be there. And Secretary Kerry will be making a presentation that I feel obligated to be personally present for. So I want to thank you all for adjusting your calendar so that you could be here at 1:00. I'm going to put my full statement in the record but just let me make a few observations to start.

When the Helsinki process started in 1975, there were many naysayers in the United States. They were saying: How can such a large regional organization be effective which only has consensus as a way of making decisions; there are no sanctions for failure to comply with the Helsinki commitments; that the Soviet Union would use this as propaganda rather than dealing with the real problems that their country faces in complying with the commitments that were made in 1975. There are others who said: When you combine human rights with economics and hard security issues, human rights will get lost in the equation, and that this organization will just be another example of how we deal with hard security issues or perhaps some of the trade or economic issues but that human rights would not be front and center.

I think history has proven both of those concerns to be without merit. Now the OSCE, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, has become a dominant factor, bringing people together to talk about problems and to advance causes in all of the member states, particularly on the basket of human rights and good governance. It's known for that globally. And there are so many organizations that tie into the OSCE because they know they have a friend on advancing human rights.

The U.S. Helsinki Commission has taken leadership on so many different issues, from trafficking to anticorruption to the protection of minority communities, and we have effectively brought about changes in not just the OSCE member regions but throughout the globe. We have expanded within the OSCE. We have, of course, partners in the OSCE outside of the OSCE region. I'm particularly pleased about the advancement of the OSCE footprint in the Mediterranean. We have partners from Afghanistan to Israel to Jordan to North African countries, and we have strengthened the Mediterranean dimension that has brought about significant progress.

When I was in Israel many years ago, promoting at the time the OSCME, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in the Middle East, I remember meeting with then-president Peres and asked whether Israel would be interested in joining such a regional group, recognizing that there would be many Arab states and just one Jewish state. His answer to me: We want any type of regional organization that allows us to communicate, because we think talking with our neighbors is the best way to work out problems, and that the OSCE has been so successful among countries with very different views that that model would work well in the Middle East.

So when President Park of South Korea was here in Washington and addressed a joint session of Congress and mentioned her support for a regional organization for East Asia, it got my attention. I then traveled to the region and had a chance to talk to the leadership of China, Japan and Korea. All three underscored what they thought made good sense for their own interests if there was a regional organization similar to the OSCE for East Asia.

The main concern is clearly North Korea today. Now, that may change a decade from now. We hope it does. And North Korea is interesting because it's not just the security issues of their nuclear ambitions – and there is unanimity among Japan, China and South Korea that they want a nuclear-free Korea Peninsula. They all agree on that. But it's also the human rights and economic issues within Korea that – North Korea which is problematic. The people there are some of the most oppressed in the world. And their economic prosperity is near the bottom of the global world also, with people literally being starved to death.

So having a regional organization modeled after the OSCE or within the OSCE that can help dialogue between the countries of East Asia seems to me to be a very positive step in trying to resolve some of the long-

term conflicts. And of course I could mention China's most recent activities concerning their air security zone, which raises tension. It seems to me that if there was an OSCE for East Asia, that that mechanism could also have been helpful to deal with maritime security issues.

So it goes on and on and on, the type of matters that we believe this type of process could be very helpful in dealing with these concerns. So it was for that reason that I was very pleased that today's hearing could take place so we can start to establish a record as it relates to whether and how we can move forward on this type of proposal for East Asia. I must tell you my interest is a little bit higher today because, in addition to chairing the U.S. Helsinki Commission, I also chair the Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

I very much welcome the panel of experts that we have here today, all of whom have incredible credentials in this area: Carl Gershman, the president of the National Endowment for Democracy, and one of the longstanding supporters and advocates for human rights across the globe, and has been a longstanding advocate of using our Helsinki process experience in East Asia. Karin Lee, who is the executive director of the National Committee on North Korea. In that capacity she oversees the committee's work to facilitate engagement between citizens of the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. So she has a good deal of experience here. And Frank Jannuzi, who is the deputy executive director of Amnesty International and is a former advisor to then-Senator Kerry, and also has experience at the State Department on – working on multilateral affairs.

So it's wonderful to have all three of you here. And we welcome your testimony, but more importantly we welcome your involvement as we try to find ways to use the success of the Helsinki process to bring better understanding and cooperation in other parts of the world. And with that, we'll start with Mr. Gershman.

GERSHMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And thank you to the Helsinki Commission for organizing this hearing at a critical moment in U.S. relations with Northeast Asia.

It was almost eight years ago to the day that I and several others, active on human rights in North Korea, joined with policy in Korea affairs specialists to form a working group to consider how a comprehensive framework involving international security, economic cooperation, human rights and humanitarian aid could be developed for the Korean Peninsula and more broadly for Northeast Asia. I'm very happy that Roberta Cohen, who is a member of that working group and who co-chairs the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea is with us today.

Our decision to form this group followed the agreement reached in the six-party talks to explore ways of promoting a common political, economic and security agenda linking the two Koreas with China, Russia, Japan and the United States. This opened the door to creating a permanent multilateral organization for advancing security and cooperation in Northeast Asia, one of the few regions of the world without such a mechanism.

Ambassador Jim Goodby of our working group, who had played a key role in developing the "basket three" human rights provisions that became part of the Helsinki Final Act, drafted the first of several papers that spelled out how the negotiations to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue and achieve a final settlement of the Korean War could evolve into a Helsinki-type process for Northeast Asia, leading to the eventual creation of a multilateral and multidimensional organization for collective security.

The effort to encourage such a process had the strong backing of Ban Ki-moon at the time. He was South Korea's foreign minister, of course now the secretary general of the United Nations, who told a major gathering in Helsinki in 2006 – a gathering of Asian and European leaders – that – and I quote, "The challenge for Northeast Asia is how to draw upon the European experience to build a mechanism for multilateral security cooperation."

Building such a mechanism was the focus of one of the five working groups of the six-party talks, but efforts to implement the idea were aborted when the talks broke down at the end of 2008. Since then, international relations in Northeast Asia have become much more confrontational. The region suffers from what South Korea's President Park has called Asia's paradox, which is an acute discrepancy between the region's dynamic economic growth and interdependence on the one hand and the rise of nationalism, conflict and distrust on the other.

Clashes over disputed maritime space in the East China Sea, North Korea's nuclear threat and provocative brinkmanship, intensified military competition and historically rooted tensions even between such ostensible allies as Japan and South Korea have heightened anxiety over prospects for violent conflict in the region. The situation has just become, of course, even more dangerous with China's unilateral establishment of an Air Defense Identification Zone overlapping with Japan's own air defense zone, and encompassing South Korea's Leodo reef as well. In the words of *The Economist*, "China has set up a *causus belli* with its neighbors and America for generations to come."

Ironically, whereas North Korea's nuclear program was the catalyst for the six-party talks and the possible creation of a system of collective security for Northeast Asia, it is now the grave deterioration of the security environment in the region itself that could act as such a catalyst. The crisis certainly dramatizes the critical need for such a system, though that is a long-term goal while the immediate need is for measures to reduce risk, enhance communication through military hotlines and other instruments that might prevent miscalculations, and to begin to develop military confidence-building measures similar to those negotiated in the CFCE framework.

Nonetheless, it's not too early to begin thinking about a more comprehensive architecture that would provide a forum for regional powers to discuss security. *The Economist* suggested that such a forum, had it existed in Europe in the early part of the last century, might have prevented the outbreak of World War I, and that there are disturbing parallels to the situation in Northeast Asia today with the Senkaku Islands playing the role of Sarajevo.

For such a forum to be sustainable and effective, a security dialogue would need to be buttressed by a broader program of exchanges and economic cooperation. It has been said that adding a "basket three" human dimension would not work for Northeast Asia because the region's autocracies are well aware of the liberalizing consequences of the Helsinki process in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, but it's hard to imagine a system of collective security working out without more interaction at the societal level and having a broader context for negotiations that would make possible tradeoffs that might facilitate reaching an agreement.

Northeast Asia may be different from the region encompassed by the Helsinki process, but the "Sakharov doctrine" regarding the indivisibility of human rights and international security has universal relevance and should not be abandoned even if it has to be adapted to the circumstances of the region.

In addition to the incentive provided by the current crisis to explore a new system of collective security for Northeast Asia, I want to note two other factors that can be helpful. The first is the vigorous support given to the idea by President Park when she addressed the joint session of Congress last May, as you have noted, Mr. Chairman. Her statement has of course now been overshadowed by the momentum toward confrontation in South Korea's declaration of an expanded air defense zone partially overlapping China's and including Leodo only adds to this momentum.

Still, South Korea's understandable response to China's over-reaching may help to establish the strategic balance needed to negotiate an end to the current crisis. And President Park's commitment to a system of collective security shows that she may want to use this crisis to make the case for a broader architecture. Her capacity to provide leadership at this critical time should not be underestimated.

She demonstrated both toughness and a readiness to negotiate when, after a period of heightened tension following North Korea's nuclear test explosion last April, South Korea reached an agreement with the North to reopen the Kaesong Industrial Zone. This experiment in economic cooperation shows the potential for President Park's "trustpolitik" through North Korea's cancellation – though North Korea's cancellation of family reunions that were part of the Kaesong agreement also shows how – how difficult it will be to sustain any kind of engagement with Pyongyang.

Still, her steadiness of purpose is encouraging, as is her desire, as she told the Congress last May, to use the trust-building process that she has started "beyond the Korean Peninsula to all of Northeast Asia, where," she said, "we must build a mechanism of peace and security." That goal would be significantly advanced, I think, if she would apply her "trustpolitik" to Japan, as well.

The other helpful factor is the potential role of Mongolia. In a recent paper contrasting the challenge of building a collective security system in Europe and Asia, the Japanese diplomat Takako Ueta wrote that Northeast Asia – and this is a quote – "lacks a neutral country with diplomatic skills and efficient conference support comparable to Austria, Finland, Sweden or Switzerland." But that is not true, because Mongolia is such a country.

Last April, when Mongolia chaired the 7th Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies, its president, Elbegdorj, announced the Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security, an initiative to broaden – I quote – "from our Mongolian friends, a dialogue mechanism on security in Northeast Asia that will give" – again, quote – "equal consideration of the interest of all states and set a long-term goal of building peace and stability in the region.

Mongolia has an unusual geopolitical situation. Sandwiched between China and Russia, it has maintained what President Elbegdorj called neighborly good relations with these two big powers, as well as with the other nations in the region, which he – which he calls our third neighbor. It even maintains good relations with North Korea, which were not spoiled when President Elbegdorj concluded a state visit to the DPRK on October 30th with a speech at Kim Il-Sung University in which he said, and I quote, "no tyranny lasts forever, it is the desire of the people to live free that is the eternal power." He also told his North Korean audience that 20 years earlier, Mongolia had declared herself a nuclear-free zone, and that it prefers ensuring her security by political, diplomatic and economic means.

Mongolia's international position is rising. In addition to chairing the Community of Democracies, it recently joined the OSCE – I know it had your support in doing so – and may soon become a member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Organization. Last September, at the opening of the General Assembly in New York, President Elbegdorj was the only head of state invited to join President Obama in presiding over a forum of the administration's Civil Society Initiative, that seeks to defend civil society around the world against growing government restrictions.

Henry Kissinger, writing about Austria's chancellor, Bruno Kreisky, observed that – and I quote – "one of the asymmetries of history is the lack of correspondence between the abilities of some leaders and the power of their countries." President Elbegdorj is such an outsized leader of a small country, and the fact that he is now positioning Ulaanbaatar to play the kind of role in Northeast Asia that Helsinki once played in Europe could be an important factor leading to a system of collective security in Northeast Asia.

The region certainly has its own distinctive characteristics, and Helsinki does not offer a readily transferrable cookie-cutter model for East Asia or any other region, but as Ambassador Goodby said in one of the papers he wrote for our working group, so long as nation-states are the basic building blocks of the international system, the behavior of these units within that system is not likely to be radically dissimilar. History suggests that autonomous behavior by powerful nations, behavior that ignores the interests of others, sooner or later, leads to disaster. The corollary of this lesson is that some mechanism has to be found, be it

implicit or explicit, to allow for policy accommodations and for self-imposed restraint within a system of nations. To fail to do so is to make a collision almost inevitable.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CARDIN: Thank you very much for your testimony.

Ms. Lee.

LEE: Thank you very much, Chairman Cardin. It's an honor to appear before you today to discuss the Helsinki process as a model for resolving the crisis in Northeast Asia. I have submitted a longer written statement and will now take this opportunity to highlight the main points of my written remarks.

I have been the executive director of the National Committee on North Korea since February 2006, and my first visit to the DPRK was in 1998, and my most recent visit was this past October. I just wanted to comment that these remarks reflect my own views and are not necessarily the views of my organization.

First, I will reflect on the differences and similarities in the United States and Europe in the 1970s and Northeast Asia today, then I will discuss private sector or civil society activities in the DPRK. I will make three key points: First, the history of the two regions in the historical moments are very different. To implement a Helsinki-like process in Northeast Asia would take considerable U.S. investment.

Second, despite limited government support, productive work is taking place inside the DPRK and with North Koreans elsewhere in humanitarian, education and medical fields. The United States can contribute to these efforts by delinking security policy from what the Helsinki Process called Basket 3 activities and streamlining its visa process. Finally, exchanges on topics of genuine regional interest may contribute to a foundation for regional problem-solving.

The final act asserts that states will respect each other's sovereign equality and individuality, as well as all the rights inherent in and encompassed by its sovereignty. Nevertheless, the Helsinki Process is sometimes credited with contributing to the changes that later swept through Eastern Europe. The OSCE is best known today for its current work on human rights and democratization. Therefore, the DPRK would likely look at a Helsinki Process for Northeast Asia as a Trojan horse, synonymous with a covert strategy for regime change.

Yet, the Helsinki Final Act as it was originally conceived, a process aiming to increase regional stability by addressing the most salient interests of the opposing forces, may have merit for Northeast Asia. However, attention must be paid to creating an environment where such a process would be possible.

In my written testimony, I highlighted seven points of comparison between 1970s Europe and Northeast Asia today. Now, I will address just one issue, willingness to compromise. As the – as the commissioners know, the Helsinki Process began with a proposal from the USSR to finalize post-World War II boundaries and guarantee territorial integrity. Neither the U.S. nor its allies were eager to set boundaries; however, the West was willing to negotiate, because the dialogue included topics that were in its own interest.

In order to apply a Helsinki-like process to East Asia, the mechanism will need to bring everybody's concerns to the table. The U.S. and its partners in the region need to re-examine the incentives that have been offered to the DPRK in exchange for denuclearization.

I will now turn to people-to-people exchanges. Whereas the U.S. had a glowing array of private contacts and exchanges with the Soviet Union throughout most of the Cold War, such connections with the DPRK have been slow to develop. After North Korea issued its first appeal for international assistance to respond to the 1990s famine, humanitarian aid expanded rapidly. After the famine, a handful of U.S. and other

NGOs remained active in the DPRK, developing agricultural, medical and capacity-building programs. There is now an impressive number of Western actors in the DPRK, as shown by the engaged DPRK mapping initiative. This web-based tool demonstrates the range of private sector activities that have taken place in North Korea over the last 18 years.

While not comprehensive, the online map lists over 1,000 discrete projects carried out by 480 organizations coming from 29 different countries. Here are just a few examples: World Visions' Community Development Project in Dochi-Ri, a community of 12,000, is building water systems and providing solar energy for schools, clinics and local residents' homes.

The Pyongyang University of Science and Technology is the first private university in the DPRK. It currently has 400 graduates and 110 graduate students and plans to expand enrollment in 2000 (sic). All of its teachers are foreign. The majority of the teachers are from the United States.

The University of British Columbia Knowledge Partnership Program brings North Korean university professors to UBC for a six-month study program on topics such as modern economic theory, finance, trade and business practices. Such projects help build relationships between the DPRK and the West. The nongovernmental sector also engages with North Koreans on security matters in Track 2 and Track 1.5 dialogue. This dialogue at times makes important contributions to official diplomacy.

The most fundamental way the U.S. could support people-to-people diplomacy is the issuance of visas for North Koreans to visit the United States. The Helsinki Final Act declared that progress in one area was delinked from progress in other areas. However, for most of the last two decades U.S. policy has been to approve visas as an incentive or reward to the DPRK while denying them to signal U.S. displeasure.

Cultural exchanges provide a good example of the sharp contrast between U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union and toward the DPRK. The visit of the New York Philharmonic to Pyongyang in 2008 was very successful and widely broadcast throughout the DPRK. Musicians and organizations in both countries hope to arrange a reciprocal visit by a North Korean orchestra to the United States, but U.S. visas for such a visit have never been issued.

Another area for growth may be science diplomacy and regional programming on a range of humanitarian environmental issues such as disaster and preparedness for public health – or public health. The Mt. Paektu Changbai Shan volcano, which straddles the Chinese-North Korean border, provides a useful example. Mt. Paektu is considered to be the most dangerous volcano in China. Recent monitoring has shown signs of worrying activity. Planning future eruption scenarios requires gathering and sharing data across political borders. Comprehensive information sharing is necessary to plan a robust response to any volcanic activity.

In 2011, the American Association for the Advancement of Science began a scientific collaboration project with the DPRK on Mt Paektu seismic activity. But this is a rare example. The DPRK is not a member of regional networks. Institutionalizing North Korean participation in regional and bilateral research would improve disaster preparedness while also strengthening regional collaboration.

Another particularly beneficial area for scientific exchange could be medical consortiums. Medical cooperation in Northeast Asia is weak and the DPRK is not included in relevant existing medical networks, yet regional collaboration on infectious disease benefits citizens of all countries. Tuberculosis may be of interest to Northeast Asia. Only Sub-Saharan Africa has higher reported TB rates than the DPRK. Integration into regional health networks would build upon this strong in-country work of the WHO, the Global Fund and U.S. organizations such as the Eugene Bell Foundation, Christian Friends of Korea and Stanford University.

NGO activities in the DPRK are addressing unmet humanitarian needs that contribute to the exchange of values and ideas. Cultural and educational exchanges add to the effectiveness of these ongoing efforts. Such activities, including regional networks, should be encouraged for the immediate practical benefits they can bring. This could begin to establish a pattern of cooperative regional behavior for the future.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I look forward to your questions.

CARDIN: Thank you very much for your testimony.

Mr. Jannuzi?

JANNUZI: Thank you, Senator Cardin. It's my pleasure to be here today. Two previous witnesses have covered some of what I had intended to cover, so I will, with your permission, summarize my remarks and really get right to the point.

CARDIN: Thank you. And all of your full statements will be made part of the record.

JANNUZI: Thank you, Senator.

Senator, discussing North Korea and how to effect changes there really requires us to think about the theory of change that we're operating under. And there are those who believe that denuclearization of North Korea is the key which unlocks the box which holds all of the other changes on human rights, economic policies, regional integration, and peace and security on the peninsula. I believe that that belief is misguided and false. It is unrealistic to expect North Korea to denuclearize first and integrate and make peace with its neighbors.

Second, this doesn't mean that the international community, in its efforts to engage North Korea, must somehow reward bad behavior, appease North Korea or lift sanctions on North Korea that have been in place by the international community and the United States because of North Korea's misconduct, but it does mean that the hope of denuclearization, to me, rests as part of a process that changes fundamentally the strategic environment within which North Korea makes decisions about its future, and changing that environment is what the Helsinki process for North Korea could offer.

Now, the recent leadership change in North Korea has put it back on the front pages, but to me this only underscores the realization that North Korea's challenge to us is, in fact, multidimensional. We would not be having the same concerns about North Korea's nuclear program if its human rights record were not what it is. And that human rights record, let me say on behalf of Amnesty International, is of course appalling.

Recent satellite imagery analysis done by Amnesty International has confirmed the continuing investments in North Korea's architecture of repression: the gulags which house perhaps 100,000 North Korea citizens, including men, women and children, without hope of parole or a life after prison. The gulags are not fading and disappearing. In fact, our recent analysis shows that they continue to be enlarged in some cases and modernized. It is against this backdrop of unbelievable human suffering in gulags, as well as severe restrictions across every other human right – freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of movement – that the North Korean issue must be addressed.

There is no longer any doubt about the severity of the human rights challenges in North Korea. And in fact, the U.N. has established a commission of inquiry examining it, which will report to the U.N. next spring. But neither is there any doubt about the nuclear dimension of the problem. We all know what it is. North Korea is producing fissile material. They have tested at least three nuclear devices. They continue to work on long-range missiles.

Over the course of six visits to North Korea, I've had the privilege at one point of visiting the Yongbyong nuclear complex and seeing some of the plutonium product that they had produced as a result of reprocessing spent fuel from the Yongbyong nuclear reactor. This problem, like North Korea's human rights problem, is only getting worse as time goes by.

Now, for the better part of 30 years the United States has attempted to address this challenge by persuading North Korea to abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons, with very disappointing results. Most of the attempts to change North Korea's trajectory have been focused on that narrow goal of denuclearization. And even those like the agreed framework – which, as my colleagues have pointed out, included an explicit basket designed to get at the other regional dimensions of the problem – still frontloaded the nuclear issue and left everything else to be sort of the kinds of things that would be addressed when time was available later, once the North had demonstrated the sincerity of their commitment to denuclearization.

But I think the critics of engagement of North Korea have at least one thing right: North Korea is not sincere about denuclearization yet, and to expect them to make the so-called strategic choice to denuclearization in the current environment of a Korea divided and at war, and a nation under sanction, a nation isolated without hope of a better future for its people through economic engagement, through educational exchanges and scientific exchanges and other forms of integration is unrealistic.

So we need to shape the playing field. How to do it? It's time for the United States to lead decisively. The United States must create the conditions that existed at the time the Helsinki process was launched. It's important you, Senator, understand, the members of the commission understand, that the Helsinki process did not precede détente. In fact, the original openings for arms control and engagement with the Soviet Union had already been made by the time the Helsinki process was launched. But the Helsinki process was the critical expansion of the pathways of engagement that enabled what began as an arms control initiative really to take on strategic significance.

In the case of North Korea, the United States needs to reach out, at a senior level, whether it's privately or publicly – it's a matter of tactics – but to communicate the fact that a new day is dawning with respect to how the United States intends to work with its partners in the region, and indeed to engage North Korea, to bring about a change in the strategic environment.

The Helsinki approach would begin with a modest agenda, not the complete, irreversible denuclearization – although, to be clear, that has to be part of the end goal. You know, for the United States to abandon that would be folly of the highest order. It's a question of how we get there from here. You know, engagement would have to be given time to work. A change doesn't happen overnight, but there are signs of change in North Korea, change that we ought to be encouraging rather than ignoring.

The alternatives to a Helsinki-style process don't offer us a quicker solution to the problem. I mean, this is one of the fundamental things that I've come to realize over a career of 25 years dealing with this problem. You know, the folks who say, well, first we've got to solve the nuclear problem and we don't have time to wait for engagement to yield the fruits of engagement in terms of a change of North Korea attitudes. If we had just started this process 25 years ago we would be in a different place now. And there's no reason to believe that the North is going to change without outside and internal stimuli.

So let's be candid: The United States has to lead. The strategic patience approach of the United States is not one that is likely to bring about change in the coming years. The good news is that there are many willing partners of the United States. As you mentioned, Senator, every other country in the region is crying out for U.S. multilateral engagement with North Korea. And our core strategic ally in the region, South Korea, President Park – with respect to the situation in North Korea, the core ally – has put forward a Seoul process, “trustpolitik” initiative, which to me should be the root of this Helsinki-style form of engagement.

Is any of this politically feasible in the United States? Where is the constituency for such an initiative? Well, look, I've been advising members of the Senate for 15 years in my prior life. There is – there are very few people in this town clamoring for President Obama to jumpstart diplomacy with North Korea, but the fact is that the American people may be more receptive to such an initiative than the members of congress generally believe.

The recent polling data on Iran is a case in point. Despite all of the mistrust which characterizes U.S.-Iran relations and the nuclear outreach that the administration has launched, by a 2-to-1 margin the American people support striking a deal with Iran even if that deal might eventually require sanctions relief and even if the results of that deal might not yield the complete elimination of Iran's nuclear program as a near-term result.

Now, I know from first-hand experience that there exists a constituency for reform inside North Korea. I have met with them at the Academy of Science, at the universities, in the agriculture field, in the trade field. But they have been marginalized, undercut by years of failed nuclear diplomacy and heightened military tension.

So I think, Senator, it's time to be bold. It's time for the United States to set the stage for a Helsinki-style multilateral, multidimensional engagement process, one that would absolutely need to include the voices of countries like Mongolia and Singapore and Australia and New Zealand, countries that participated in the last attempt at anything like a strategic engagement, which was the agreed framework of 1994. Those countries were all a part of it to one degree or another. They should be brought back into the process.

This process won't offer a quick fix, but one of the things that Amnesty International believes and that I believe is that the principal beneficiaries of such a process in the near term will be the North Korean people. They will be among the first to see meaningful benefits. And a policy that therefore puts the people of North Korea before the plutonium of North Korea can yield results for both.

Thank you, Senator. I look forward to your questions.

CARDIN: Well, thank you for your testimony. And I agree with your conclusion that we have to be bold.

The six-party talks as it relates to North Korea was viewed as a one-issue effort to deal with nuclear ambitions of North Korea and aimed at one country: North Korea. The establishment of a regional organization is a much broader aspect: not one country, not one issue.

Ms. Lee, you mentioned that it would – could be perceived by North Korea as a “Trojan Horse” for regime change. I think that looking at this from a broader perspective, there's an argument that can be successfully made to counter those concerns.

Mr. Gershman, you talk about it being viewed as liberalization of policies in autocratic countries. Once again, I think looking at it from a broader perspective, that argument can be successfully overcome in the countries that may have those concerns.

The success of Helsinki was first trust. There is a lack of trust among the various players here. They believed each other's countries' intentions were not honorable. I've witnessed that firsthand in my visit to China and their view of U.S. intentions. And the Helsinki process helps establish trust by consensus. You can't get anything accomplished other than through consensus. We thought that would be a weakness and it ended up being the strength of the Helsinki process.

Secondly, the principles are universal principles. They're not Western principles. And I think that's a key ingredient of the success of the Helsinki process.

And then, third, diverse membership. When you look at Northeast Asia or look at East Asia, and you look at the countries that would be asked to participate in a regional organization, you look at Russia and the United States and China and North Korea, I don't think there would be anyone accusing us of stacking the deck in a consensus organization.

And lastly, by way of example, we've had our problems in the United Nations. No question about it. The United Nations has a unique structure with the Permanent Council and the five members, but it has brought greater consensus when decisions are made.

So I just would like to get your assessment as to how realistic it is to get the major players to invest in a regional organization for Asia that – concentrating on Northeast Asia we may go a little bit beyond that – whether this is a doable task or whether the concerns of “Trojan Horses” and liberalizations are too difficult to overcome.

GERSHMAN: I think if you have the local parties negotiating this, they will shape something that is acceptable to the local countries. And even today, you know, with the Kaesong agreement there's a process underway there and it involves the beginning of, you know, its economic activity, but there's also human contact that is taking place there.

So the human contact that was encouraged in part of the Helsinki process is already part of this, and it has to be. There's no way in the world that – in the interconnected world that we live in today that you can dispense with this dimension. I think it's terribly unfortunate that North Korea cancelled the family visits. But, you know, I believe that President Park is determined and these visits will eventually, I hope, continue.

The one thing I think we have to remember which is different about this process than Helsinki was that back in the time of Helsinki the Soviet Union wanted an agreement to formalize the borders from World War II. That was, in my view, their main incentive in wanting the Helsinki agreement. And as I understand it – and I welcome your own views; they may be different – that what we wanted as part of that was a “basket three.” And I don't see that kind of tradeoff in the process today.

What I do see as the major incentive in the process today is this – the new security situation, which is extremely dangerous. I would not get obsessed about North Korea as we think about how to carry this process forward, because I think that the much more immediate and dangerous problem is what China has done in expanding its Air Defense Identification Zone, which is extremely dangerous. I mean, it could lead to the shooting down of civilian airliners. And a way has to be found to avoid miscalculations, to avoid these kind of horrible events to take place. And I think it makes the case as graphically as anything could that you need a system for anticipating problems and resolving disputes.

Now, that doesn't address the kind of issues that Frank was talking about with North Korea, but I do think that in a way that is now on a separate track with the process that has been started with the Kaesong agreement, which I think is quite significant, even though it's run into some real difficulties with North Korea. And I think these processes have to move simultaneously. And in both processes, I think ultimately you're going to need to have a way to connect the societies in addition to having the militaries talk to each other and the governments talk to each other. And I think that's possible because it in my view, serves the interest of everyone in a globalized world.

CARDIN: Ms. Lee, I'm going to give you a chance to respond. First let me acknowledge that we have here today Ambassador Robert King, the State Department special envoy for human rights in North Korea. He's also a former staff director of the House Foreign Affairs Committee under the leadership of my dear friend Tom Lantos, who we miss these days. It's a pleasure to have Ambassador King in the room.

Ms. Lee, I want you to respond to the question, but I want to just focus on one part of your testimony where you talk about people-to-people and the importance of people-to-people. And you give many examples where the United States has been difficult in facilitating the people-to-people exchange. And it seems to me, from North Korea's point of view, participation in a regional organization that includes the United States with its defined principles that encourage people-to-people would make those types of arrangements a lot easier to accommodate and could be a major point for North Korea's interest in such a regional organization.

LEE: Thank you very much.

I would say, on the issue of visas, I do think it would be of great benefit to rationalize that process. In general, it's possible to get visas – for North Koreans to get visas to visit the United States on humanitarian issues, and some – on some educational issues. But anything that strays beyond very limited range of topics can be very problematic at times of tension. And so when Frank mentioned earlier that the big package of the agreed framework was never realized, one of the things that was never realized was normalization of relations, or the kind of exchanges that we really would have wanted to see, with North Koreans being able to come over on a regular basis.

And I wanted to comment a little bit on your question of, is there any hope? One of the big benefits of the four-party process and the six-party process was constant communication among the parties. And when we talk about the escalation of threats and danger in the region today, I believe it's because that kind of regional dialogue isn't taking place. I don't believe in the dismissive phrase "talking for talking's sake." I actually believe that those conversations kept relations moving on a much more even keel.

And in that regard I would say that the actual topic in some ways is less important than the actual process. And in that regard, I'm really intrigued by the statement you made in your opening comments that North Korea might be the focus now but it might not be the focus 10 years from now. That kind of perspective to me really opens the door for much more creative thinking on how to move a regional process forward.

CARDIN: Oh, absolutely. Depending of course on member countries, we would expect that there would be a variety of reasons beyond one country for creating this type of regional organization.

Mr. Jannuzi, you mentioned being bold. Ms. Lee said it would take considerable U.S. investment to get this going. Is this possible, and how much effort will it take?

JANNUZI: Senator, the United States is a great power. It's capable of doing many things simultaneously. We have talented diplomatic personnel like Ambassador King, who I believe, frankly, we're not making the most use of at the moment. And it's not because they're uninterested or haven't shown initiative. It's because it really requires, at the end of the day, a decision from the top to take some political risks in order to see whether there will be a reward.

That risk calculation is a political decision far above my pay grade, always has been, but I think the key thing is to appreciate that the strategic patience approach also entails risks. The escalating risk of violence in the region is manifest. North Korea's conduct is not improving. Other regional problems that could be successfully mitigated through a Helsinki-style engagement process are in fact growing more acute. So we shouldn't assess the level of investment required against a zero sum. You know, we need to appreciate that what we're doing right now entails a cost.

And finally, I would just say that the beauty of a Helsinki-style engagement is that the foundation on which it's based is one of sovereignty and equality among sovereign states. Now, that may be something that sticks in the craw of a lot of us when we think about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, but I think that those who have engaged successfully in diplomacy with North Korea have done so on the basis of a certain level of respect.

I briefed President Carter prior to his 1994 mission to Pyongyang, and I'll never forget that at the end of that briefing he turned to those of us at the State Department at the time – and we had spent all day briefing him and Rosalynn Carter about the realities of North Korea since he had left the presidency. And he turned to us and he says – he says, now, none of you have told me what I need to know. And I hung my head along with everyone else in the room – Robert Gallucci and others. He says, I need to know, what does Kim Il-sung want? And again I kind of looked under the table and tried to look for the answer that might be buried there. And finally President Carter said to all of us, he says, I'll tell you what Kim Il-sung wants. He wants my respect, and I'm going to give it to him.

Now, at the core, solving this problem requires a certain suspension of disbelief and an engagement with North Korea as a sovereign nation, which means that it's not just their human rights record which will be on the table. They'll be allowed to raise human rights concerns that they have about the misconduct of the Japan during the colonial era. The United States may be able to raise concerns that we have with China about the treatment of North Korea refugees on Chinese soil.

You know, this dialogue is not a one-way street where all of the concessions and all of the change has to happen in one direction. But that also holds the key to why it may be attractive to even a state, you know, such as in the circumstances of North Korea, because it gives them a sovereign opportunity to raise the concerns they have.

CARDIN: All right, let me give you three options and get your view as to which option you think would be the most fruitful to pursue.

One option could be to build on the partner status that we have for countries that are not in the OSCE but under the umbrella of the OSCE to try to assist and help understand what is happening within the OSCE in their own bilateral and regional contacts. There are a lot of organizations in which that could be used that currently exist, but not creating any new organization but simply using the current available opportunities to get more partners in the region.

The second option could be to build within the OSCE a regional organization for Asia, East Asia or Northeast Asia, that could build on the principles of OSCE with modifications as the region believes are necessary but not reinventing the principles of Helsinki.

And the third is to create a separate regional organization patterned after Helsinki, which would require, of course, the member states to agree on the principles that they would abide by and the structure of the organization, which may be similar to OSCE but there's no assurance until after negotiations take place.

Do you have a preference as to which of those three options the United States should invest its energy in?

JANNUZI: Senator, if I might, for North Korea their assessment of the end goals of such a regional process will be affected by how it come into being and their own assessment of what the goals and purposes and outcomes were of the Helsinki process.

And so I guess the one caveat I would have about – or the one concern I would have about building a special regional organization under the auspices of the OSCE directly is that we all know today that the Soviet Union no longer exists. Now, that wasn't the objective of the Helsinki process but it may very well be viewed as sort of the necessary outcome of such a process by some in North Korea.

I think having a tutoring, mentoring, skills-sharing process – the first option that you outlined – as the beginning is the place to start, because there's great questioning going on right now in Pyongyang about how

they attempt to improve their – their international situation, which is pretty dire, and educating and sharing what the process might look like would be the first step in getting them to buy in. And then I think you could decide later about whether, ultimately, it's a structure that is an outgrowth of the OSCE or a new standalone sui generis novel idea.

I'm an incrementalist at heart, and I kind of am frightened by the notion of having to stand up something brand new. We have three years of negotiations about that process rather than replicating what's already working someplace else. So I think that there's a lot of reasons to favor your sort of a hybrid of that first option that you suggested, and then possibly, you know, see what becomes possible afterwards.

CARDIN: Good diplomatic answer. Ms. Lee?

LEE: I very much appreciate what Frank has said and would endorse it. And I would just add something that Gershman said in his opening testimony, which is that the Northeast Asia peace and security working group, established as part of the six-party talks, they created a set of guiding principles for a regional structure, and that was based, in large part, on the Helsinki process.

So the DPRK – all six parties agreed to that process. So that idea is already out there. You mentioned it yourself in your testimony. Unfortunately, when that negotiation process broke down, that idea, that concept, those conversations went into hibernation, but I think they could be brought back.

GERSHMAN: I think there's an awful lot of advice – sharing of experience that can be transferred from the Helsinki process to what's going on today in Northeast Asia, especially in the area of military confidence-building measures, to look at exactly what was done in the Helsinki process and – as a basis for what might be done in Northeast Asia today. And so there can be a lot of those kinds of contacts, but everything I've – you know, all the discussions that I've had with people in the region and what I've read is that there's a strong feeling that Northeast Asia is different. And I think we should start with that basis.

And I really think we should see what our Mongolian friends have started there as an opportunity. And maybe if the U.S. got behind it – Mongolia is a small country; it was not part of the six-party talks, but it's strategically placed. It's very appropriate in the region to start a process. That's what they want to do. And it needs, I think, a little bit of buy-in from higher levels. And I think if the U.S., maybe in cooperation with its allies in the region, Japan and Korea, maybe starting a discussion with China which is, you know, neighbor of Mongolia to try to begin to encourage this idea because you now have the potential for a regular forum. It doesn't have to be the only one, but I think that, to me, is a more creative way to go, because it sort of recognizes the distinctiveness of the region and leaves them in charge of where this is going and not making it part of a structure which is largely seen as a trans-Atlantic structure, even though it reaches to other regions.

CARDIN: I think your reference to Mongolia several times is very interesting. Of course, Mongolia, a member of the OSCE – full membership moving towards democracy has a working relationship with North Korea. All that's a positive to try to pattern their involvement in what has worked. I would also observe in regards to the concerns on liberalization that I think China has recognized the need for reform. I mean, they understand that. They understand their future is very much dependent upon becoming more respectful with regard to internationally-recognized basic rights. And they're moving in that direction; they've made tremendous progress, and they still have so far to go.

So I think that there are some steps that have been taken in that regard. Now, Mr. Jannuzi, you mentioned the fact that they'll look at the demise of the Soviet Union into 10 separate countries as a concern – or seven, depending on how we define the Baltics, but no one is suggesting that North Korea will become smaller states. It's a little bit different circumstance.

JANNUZI: It is indeed.

CARDIN: And so I'm not sure that that analogy is exactly of concern, but you do raise a question for me, and that is, what do we do about working with Russia? In all my conversations with the players from the region, they acknowledged that Russia needs to be part of a regional organization for it to be successful in that region, and that Russia, of course, does have the direct experience of its involvement within OSCE.

I think I disagree with your assessment about Russia's initial involvement. I was not around at the time, but it was brought out to us that Russia wanted to get international recognition for their democratic reforms at the time, that they were open, and they thought that they were – that they complied with the Helsinki commitments and wanted the legitimacy of international recognition.

But I understand that there may be different motives today. So I would welcome your thoughts as to the politics for Russia being willing to join this type of a framework within Northeast Asia, recognizing, of course, the six-party talks and the working group.

GERSHMAN: Well, it was part of the six-party talks, and I think to exclude it now would almost be seen as excluding –

CARDIN: And I'm not suggest that.

GERSHMAN: No, I know – but still, I think Russia – with all the problems we have with Russia, they want to be recognized as part of a process. I think it's Russia – and this is my own personal view, Mr. Chairman. I think it's a very vulnerable power today for demographic reasons and for many other reasons. And what's happening with Ukraine today is a serious crisis for Russia, where clearly the people of Ukraine want Europe. They don't want to be part of the customs union. But still, I think Russia therefore, probably because it has a lot of vulnerabilities, a lot of problems, would welcome being part of this. And when they were part of the six-party talks, they actually chaired the Northeast Asia peace and security mechanism working group.

And everything I could tell – I was not part of those negotiations, but the views that Americans had of the way they were behaving within the six-party process was very positive. They played a constructive role. Maybe it's because of the way their interests weren't engaged here as they were, maybe, on their Western side or in the Middle East. But I think they should be a part of the process, but, you know, it's going to be a large process. It's going to be a large process, and obviously, the main drivers of this process today are going to be, you know, China, North Korea and Japan along with the United States, and – but I see no problem with having Russia part of this process.

LEE: If I could just add something, I would say that the DPRK has no concern about being broken into constituent parts, but it does have some concern about being absorbed by the south, and that's why the recognition of sovereignty is so important.

CARDIN: But on that point, aren't they better being a full member of a regional organization that requires consensus than sitting out there sort of isolated?

LEE: Absolutely – absolutely – but it's the question of, what's the ultimate goal? And the unfortunate thing is that conversations about human rights have been coupled with conversations about regime change in the past, and that has two problems. One, they can improve human rights without changing their government, and two, it gives them an excuse not to talk about human rights. So, I absolutely agree with you; being part of a regional structure that recognizes their sovereignty actually diminishes the fear that this process is being used to make them disappear.

JANNUZI: And Senator, to your point – and I agree with both of my panelists here – I think Russia can and will want to participate in such a process. And I think one of the great advantages for the United States is that we've got human rights concerns about Russia. Amnesty International – I was proud to testify before your other committee – the Foreign Relations Committee a couple of months ago about the concerns that Amnesty

International has expressed about the crackdown on freedom of speech and freedom of assembly, and especially LGBT rights in Russia right now.

Wouldn't it be great to have another forum at which the international community could raise some of these issues in a spirit of regional cooperation and integration – not in one which is designed to be punitive or overthrow governments, but would really affect the opportunity for the United States and other players to express some of those concerns. Russia's human rights record right now leaves, you know, to say the least, much to be desired.

CARDIN: You're not going to get any argument from me on that one. Mr. Gershman?

GERSHMAN: Chairman, I just also want to add another element to this discussion. You know, we're focused very, very much on inter-government relations. And the assumption here is that somehow, recognizing North Korea as an independent and sovereign state would somehow reinforce the system. Well, you know, East Germany was recognized as an independent and sovereign state, and what good did it do when revolutions took place?

And North Korea – this is just the objective facts. It's in a very vulnerable position, being next door to a very, very successful Korean society. Andrei Lankov has talked about this over and over again. And, you know, just simply the process of breaking down isolation – simply the process of breaking down isolation in the economic sphere, in the information sphere in all these different ways is going to open the North Korean people up to what's happening in the outside world and what's happening in South Korea. I think, frankly, this is a major factor here that accounts for what's happened in Burma when they realized how far behind they were lagging.

So I have no problem with, you know, recognizing them as a sovereign part of these talks and so forth. I think the underlying processes are ultimately going to change North Korea, because it's in a – it's in a hopeless position, being a neighbor to a successful Korean society and being a failed society itself.

CARDIN: Well, I agree with you completely. With or without a Helsinki process, with or without Helsinki, the realities are that if a country cannot adjust to the economic reality of its region, its political realities and security realities, its future is not going to be very bright. That has been true in Europe; it'll be true in Asia with or without a Helsinki process. The globe is getting smaller. People see what's happening with their neighbors, and they demand a future for their families, and that's going to happen on the Korean peninsula. It's going to happen in China, and changes are going to happen with or without Helsinki. The advantage of Helsinki is that you have an orderly process where your sovereignty is recognized and you have an equal status at the table and you have a chance to not only improve, but to express your concerns about what's happening among your neighbors. Yes?

JANNUZI: Senator, I just wanted to jump in because what you've just said is so important and worth underscoring.

CARDIN: Well then, jump in. (Laughter.)

JANNUZI: North Korea, in its present configuration, with its present policies, with its present international circumstances, is not on a good trajectory, and I'm convinced that the leadership of North Korea, and more and more, the people of North Korea, know that. And really, the question is not whether there will be change. And by change – by – you know, I'm not talking about regime collapse or – necessarily, and there are many different scenarios under which change can happen. But the point is that every day that goes by without a Helsinki-style engagement process is a lost day to the international community in trying to promote and bring about those changes.

It will happen much quicker, in a much more stable way, with greater transparency and with greater – with lesser risk of miscalculation and violence, with more cohesion and with less risk of great power

misunderstandings, about the future trajectory of the Korean peninsula if it handles within the context of this process.

I sat down with Senator Kerry in March of 2012 in New York along with Henry Kissinger and Jim Steinberg and Ri Yong-ho from North Korea and Volker Rühle, the former German defense minister during the time of re-unification of Germany. We had a multilateral Track II conference in New York a year and a half ago, and the one thing I can assure you is, the North Koreans are not lacking in confidence. They understand that a process such as this would open them up to certain kinds of risks. But they're not imagining they're going to come out of the end of it as the loser, necessarily. They've got their own ideas about the superiority of their own system vis-à-vis the south ultimately.

I mean, it may seem strange for us, sitting here – you know, those of us who have been to both places to imagine that that could be true. But I can assure you that the reason why this process, to me, is not a nonstarter in Pyongyang is because they can imagine a future in which they realize what they call “Juche,” which is being masters of their own fate. And they don't believe that this process, necessarily, is contrary to that. I think – I agree completely with what's been said, which is that we should be maximizing – the international community should be maximizing – the international community should be maximizing its opportunities to help shape the direction.

CARDIN: We've spent a lot of time today talking about North Korea and a regional organization. We've talked a little bit about security issues with the maritime security challenges and that potential blowing up – the comparison to World War I is certainly frightening but real. Absolutely, there could be an incident that could mushroom out of control, and it's something that is of great concern to the United States and to all of the countries.

We could be talking about environmental challenges, which are tremendous in that region; real security issues particularly with the coastal areas but also with the air quality, and particularly in China but in other countries as well. But we could be talking about two of our closest allies, the Republic and Korea and Japan, and their frosty relationships and the need to have a dialogue organization so that they can, hopefully once and for all, resolve their past differences and be able to move forward as close allies.

I mean, there are so many underlining issues here that go well beyond just North Korea, which is certainly getting the headlines today, or the maritime issue, which is certainly getting headlines today. So, yeah, I think we do somewhat of a disservice if we don't make this a much broader initiative. And that's why I used the comparison originally to the six-party talks. And I understand the dialogue came out of that and North Korea has been the focal point of it, but it seems to me from the U.S. perspective and from the regional perspective there's a much broader agenda here.

Final comments.

GERSHMAN: Well, I'd like to use what you just said as a way of making one additional point.

In October I was in Korea for the launch of something called the Asia Democracy Network, which brings together the democracy actors from the entire Asia region, and then there will be subregional networks part of it. And it brings together cross-regional networks dealing with the very issues you're talking about: the environment, transparency, conflict resolution and so forth. And there will be a Northeast Asia democracy forum established out of this.

So I think as we speak about the Helsinki process and the intergovernmental system, we should not overlook the nongovernmental dimension of this, which I think is much, much stronger today than it was in 1975. There are just many more hundreds, thousands of NGOs. They have a lot of influence. They are able to encourage and influence the policies of governments. And it's even beginning to develop in China. So I think we should keep this dimension of the scene in Asia very much on our minds. Thank you.

LEE: First, I want to thank you again for the opportunity to testify today, and to say I was really impressed by Frank's optimistic testimony when he said, yes, we can do it, and we can put all the energy into it and we can make all this happen, because I'm a real incrementalist and I was thinking more in terms of promoting some of these regional civil society networks and ensuring that the kind of exchanges on issues of regional importance that people – countries participate out of their own self-interest and not because they're trying to contribute to some greater cause.

These really can build a foundation, and that it's an excellent thing when the OSCE member countries can be engaged in those kinds of efforts and just bring in the experience of regional relationship building. And I mentioned only two topics, but there's a number of topics out there, and just to build support and the idea for this, it falls short of the vision of the process that you've raised today, but it can start immediately. And so support for those kinds of efforts to me is something we can work on this afternoon.

CARDIN: Good.

JANNUZI: And, Senator, I also want to thank you for this opportunity to appear. And it's true what Karin says. I've never been accused of being a pessimist. My brother is a physicist out in the University of Arizona, and when I talk with him about optimism and pessimism he always points out to me, he says: Frank, you know, you see the glass is half full. I know that the glass is always full completely, half of water and half of air. And we have to view Northeast Asia today as a place not of just peril but of incredible opportunity and possibility.

In terms of what can be accomplished, when you're starting from a low point where two of your treaty allies can barely talk to one another, where one of them – Japan – has territorial disputes with three of its major neighbors – Russia, China and South Korea – where human rights inside one of the member states of the region – North Korea – are at a nadir and at a point that is arguably one of the most horrific human rights conditions on the planet, you've got nowhere to go but up.

And this process offers us opportunities to yield early harvest, especially if the advice that Ms. Lee has offered is followed and we begin where we can, and then by showing the possibility of such engagement we draw more and more political support to this process, which I think ultimately is an inevitable one and a necessary one to bring peace and security to Northeast Asia.

CARDIN: Thank you. And I appreciate you mentioning NGOs. They're a critical partner of the Helsinki process. And we would clearly want any initiative for a regional organization to partner and build with the NGO community.

And I might just say, our annual meeting this year of the Parliamentary Assembly is in Azerbaijan and our participation is very much contingent upon NGOs having complete access, including from Armenia. And we're going to make sure that that is done if – with U.S. participation. So it's a very important point and I appreciate you mentioning that.

I think this discussion has been very, very helpful. I fully understand the challenges of getting any type of regional agreements in Northeast Asia. I also understand the stakes are very high. And I think your comment about the start of World War I is a reminder that these somewhat regional issues can mushroom into very difficult international circumstances. The shipping lanes are critically important. They air lanes are critically important to international commerce. So there is a direct interest of the globe in what's happening in Northeast Asia today.

And of course the threat of nuclear proliferation is an issue of global interest, and the environmental issues go well beyond just the region. So these are issues that affect all of us. And of course the United States,

being a Pacific country and being a country that has always been interested in Asia, now with the rebalance that President Obama has talked about it's a good opportunity for us to exercise greater leadership to develop more permanent ways that we can resolve issues among the countries of the region to strengthen each country and to make the region a stronger region for security, for economics and for human rights and good governance.

And that's our objective and that's why we are looking at this. And we very much appreciate the regional leaders who have come forward with suggestions, including in the six-party talks. And we intend to follow this up in the Helsinki Commission and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. And we very much appreciate your participation here today. Thank you all.

With that, the committee will stand adjourned. (Sounds gavel.)

[Whereupon, at 2:23 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Resolving Crises in East Asia through a New System of Collective Security:

The Helsinki Process as a Model

Testimony by NED President Carl Gershman before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

December 11, 2013

I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the Helsinki Commission, for organizing this hearing at a critical moment in US relations with Northeast Asia.

It was almost eight years ago to the day that I and several others active on the issue of human rights in North Korea joined with policy and Korean-affairs specialists to form a working group to consider how a comprehensive framework involving international security, economic cooperation, human rights and humanitarian aid could be developed for the Korean Peninsula and, more broadly, for Northeast Asia.

Our decision to form this group followed the agreement reached in the Six-party Talks to explore ways of promoting a common political, economic and security agenda linking the two Koreas with China, Russia, Japan and the United States. This opened the door to creating a permanent multilateral organization for advancing security and cooperation in Northeast Asia, one of the few regions of the world without such a mechanism.

Ambassador James Goodby of the working group, who had played a key role in developing the “basket three” human- rights provisions that became part of the Helsinki Final Act, drafted the first of several papers that spelled out how negotiations to resolve the North Korea nuclear issue and achieve a final settlement of the Korean War could evolve into a Helsinki-type process for Northeast Asia leading to the eventual creation of a multilateral -- and multidimensional -- organization for collective security.

The effort to encourage such a process had the strong backing of Ban Ki-moon, at the time South Korea’s Foreign Minister and now the U.N. Secretary General, who told a major gathering in Helsinki of Asian and European leaders that “The challenge for Northeast Asia is how to draw upon the European experience to build a mechanism for multilateral security cooperation.”

Building such a mechanism was the focus of one of the five working groups of the Six-party Talks, but efforts to implement the idea were aborted when the talks broke down at the end of 2008. Since then, international relations in Northeast Asia have become much more confrontational. The region suffers from what South Korea’s President Park Geun-hye has called “Asia’s paradox,” which is an acute discrepancy between the region’s dynamic economic growth and interdependence on the one hand, and the rise of nationalism, conflict and distrust on the other. Clashes over disputed maritime space in the East China Sea, North Korea’s nuclear threat and provocative brinkmanship, intensified military competition, and historically-rooted tensions, even between such ostensible allies as Japan and South Korea, have heightened anxiety over prospects for violent regional conflict.

The situation has just become even more dangerous with China’s unilateral establishment of an Air Defense Identification Zone overlapping with Japan’s own air-defense zone and encompassing South Korea’s Ieodo reef as well. In the words of *The Economist*, “China has set up a *casus belli* with its neighbors and America for generations to come.”

Ironically, whereas North Korea’s nuclear program was the catalyst for the Six-party Talks and the possible creation of a system of collective security for Northeast Asia, it is now the grave deterioration of the security environment in the region that could act as such a catalyst. The crisis certainly dramatizes the critical need for such a system, though that is a long-term goal while the immediate need is for measures to reduce risk, enhance communication through military hotlines and other instruments that might prevent miscalculations, and to begin to develop military confidence-building measures similar to those negotiated in the CSCE framework.

Nonetheless, it is not too early to begin thinking about a more comprehensive architecture that would provide a forum for regional powers to discuss security. *The Economist* suggested that such a forum, had it existed in Europe in the early part of the last century, might have prevented the outbreak of World War I, and that there are disturbing parallels to the situation in Northeast Asia today, with the Senkakus playing the role of Sarajevo.

For such a forum to be sustainable and effective, a security dialogue would need to be buttressed by a broader program of exchanges and economic cooperation. It has been said that adding a “basket-three” human dimension would not work for Northeast Asia because the region’s autocracies are well aware of the liberalizing consequences of the Helsinki process in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. But it is hard to imagine a system of collective security working without more interaction at the societal level, and having a broader context for negotiations would make possible trade-offs that might facilitate reaching an agreement. Northeast Asia may be different from the region encompassed by the Helsinki process, but the “Sakharov doctrine” regarding “the indivisibility of human rights and international security” has universal relevance and should not be abandoned, even if it has to be adapted to the circumstances of the region.

In addition to the incentive provided by the current crisis to explore a new system of collective security for Northeast Asia, I want to note two other factors that can be helpful. The first is the vigorous support given to the idea by President Park when she addressed a joint session of the Congress last May. Her statement has of course now been overshadowed by the momentum toward confrontation, and South Korea’s declaration of an expanded air defense zone partially overlapping China’s and including Ieodo only adds to this momentum. Still, South Korea’s understandable response to China’s over-reaching may help to establish the strategic balance needed to negotiate an end to the current crisis, and President Park’s commitment to a system of collective security shows that she may want to use this crisis to make the case for a broader architecture.

Her capacity to provide leadership at this critical time should not be underestimated. She demonstrated both toughness and a readiness to negotiate when, after a period of heightened tension following North Korea’s nuclear test explosion last April, South Korea reached an agreement with the North to re-open the Kaesong Industrial Zone. This experiment in economic cooperation shows the potential of President Park’s “trustpolitik,” though North Korea’s cancellation of family reunions that were part of the Kaesong agreement also shows how difficult it will be to sustain any kind of engagement with Pyongyang. Still, her steadiness of purpose is encouraging, as is her desire, as she told the Congress last May, to extend the “Trust-building Process” she has started “beyond the Korean Peninsula to all of Northeast Asia where we must build a mechanism of peace and security.” That goal would be significantly advanced if she would also apply her “trustpolitik” to Japan.

The other helpful factor is the potential role of Mongolia. In a recent paper contrasting the challenge of building a collective security system in Europe and Asia, the Japanese diplomat Takako Ueta wrote that Northeast Asia lacks “a neutral country with diplomatic skills and efficient conference support...comparable to...Austria, Finland, Sweden or Switzerland.” But that is not true because Mongolia is such a country.

Last April, when Mongolia chaired the Seventh Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies, its President Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj announced the Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security, an initiative to provide “a dialogue mechanism on security in Northeast Asia” that will give “equal consideration of the interests of all states” and set “a long-term goal of building peace and stability in the region.”

Mongolia has an unusual geopolitical situation. Sandwiched between China and Russia, it has maintained what President Elbegdorj called “neighborly good relations” with these two big powers as well as with the other nations in the region, which he calls “our third neighbor.” It even maintains good relations with North Korea, which were not spoiled when he concluded a State Visit to the DPRK on October 30 with a speech at Kim Il Sung University in which he said “No tyranny lasts forever. It is the desire of the people to

live free that is the eternal power.” He also told his North Korean audience that twenty years earlier Mongolia had declared herself “a nuclear-free zone,” and that it “prefers ensuring her security by political, diplomatic and economic means.”

Mongolia’s international position is rising. In addition to chairing the Community of Democracies, it has joined the OSCE and may soon become a member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation organization (APEC). Last September, at the opening of the U.N. General Assembly in New York, President Elbegdorj was the only head of state invited to join President Obama in presiding over a forum of the Administration’s Civil Society Initiative that seeks to defend civil society around the world against growing government restrictions.

Henry Kissinger, writing about Austria’s Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, observed that “One of the asymmetries of history is the lack of correspondence between the abilities of some leaders and the power of their countries.” President Elbegdorj is such an outsized leader of a small country, and the fact that he is now positioning Ulaanbaatar to play the kind of role in Northeast Asia that Helsinki once played in Europe could be an important factor leading to a system of collective security in Northeast Asia.

This region certainly has its own distinctive characteristics, and Helsinki does not offer a readily transferable “cookie-cutter” model for East Asia or any other region. But as Ambassador Goodby said in one of the papers he wrote for our working group, “so long as nation-states are the basic building blocks of the international system, the behavior of these units within that system is not like to be radically dissimilar. History suggests that autonomous behavior by powerful nations – behavior that ignores the interests of others – sooner or later leads to disaster. The corollary of this lesson is that some mechanism has to be found, be it implicit or explicit, to allow for policy accommodations and for self-imposed restraint within a system of nations. To fail to do so is to make a collision almost inevitable.”

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Helsinki Process and Civil Society Activities with the DPRK

Prepared Statement by
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Before the U.S. Helsinki Commission

Hearing on Resolving Crises in East Asia through a New System of Collective Security: the Helsinki Process as a Model

December 11, 2013

Chairman Cardin, Co-Chairman Smith, and distinguished members of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, it is an honor for me to appear today to discuss Resolving Crises in East Asia through a New System of Collective Security: the Helsinki Process as a Model. I appreciate the opportunity to testify, and applaud the Commission for exploring this approach to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Northeast Asian region.

I have been the executive director of the National Committee on North Korea (NCNK) since February 2006. The NCNK creates opportunities for informed dialogue about North Korea among experts from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences in an effort to foster greater understanding in the United States about the DPRK. We address all aspects of U.S. policy toward the DPRK, including security and human security issues.

I appreciate the opportunity to reflect today on the conditions in the United States and Europe that generated the Helsinki Final Act, and the differences and similarities with conditions in Northeast Asia today, which will inform the first part of my testimony. In the second part of my testimony, I will discuss U.S. and international private sector, nongovernment or civil society activities in the DPRK. My first opportunity to visit the DPRK was in 1998, and my most recent visit was this past October. During this period, I have been able to witness the creative programming non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other civil society organizations have been able to implement in the DPRK.

I will be making three key points. First, the history of the two regions and the historical moments are very different, and to implement a Helsinki-like process in Northeast Asia would take considerable U.S. and regional government investment and a policy consistency that is currently lacking today. Second, despite limited government support, admirable and productive work inside the DPRK and with North Koreans is taking place in humanitarian, education, and medical fields, and the United States can contribute to these efforts by

delinking security policy from what the Helsinki process called Basket III, or humanitarian exchanges. Finally, exchanges on topics of genuine regional interest may contribute to a foundation for regional problem-solving and should be encouraged both for the immediate practical benefits they can bring and in order to begin laying a pattern of cooperative regional behavior for the future.

1970s Europe and Northeast Asia Today: Similarities and Differences

As the Commissioners know, the Helsinki Process did not represent a single moment in history and the outcomes of the Final Act were not fully anticipated in 1975. The Helsinki Process was not designed to undermine the Soviet bloc. To the contrary, the Act underscores that signatory states “will respect each other's sovereign equality and individuality as well as all the rights inherent in and encompassed by its sovereignty” and “respect each other's right freely to choose and develop its political, social, economic and cultural systems as well as its right to determine its laws and regulations.”¹ Nevertheless, the Helsinki Process is sometimes credited with contributing to the changes that swept through the region a decade and a half later, and the OSCE is perhaps best known today for its ongoing work on human rights and democratization. For these reasons, the DPRK would likely look at a Helsinki Process designed for the Northeast Asian region as a Trojan Horse, synonymous with a covert strategy for regime change.

Yet the Helsinki Final Act as it was originally conceived -- a regional process with the primary goal of increasing regional stability by addressing the most salient interests of the opposing forces – may have merit. Therefore, in exploring whether or not it is possible to apply its lessons to the problems Northeast Asia currently faces, we should consider the Final Act's initial goals and the basis on which they were reached, not the impact it has come to represent. From this perspective, it is useful to examine the similarities and differences between Europe in the mid-1970s and Northeast Asia today.

Territorial Disputes and Arms Races as Possible Triggers of War

Cold War Europe, like East Asia today, contained several territorial hotspots that threatened to trigger a broad conflagration. The U.S.-Soviet nuclear arms race and the posture of conventional forces on the Continent added to this tension. At several points in the early years of the Cold War, the contested status of Berlin nearly led to conflict between the two blocs. However, by the time the Helsinki process got underway, the security situation in Europe had become more stable, with détente leading both sides to a greater acceptance of the status quo and arms control agreements stabilizing the dynamics of mutually assured destruction.

¹ Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe Final Act Helsinki 1 August 1975.
<http://www.hri.org/docs/Helsinki75.html#Introduction>

In contemporary East Asia, in contrast, longstanding points of regional tension have only gotten more heated in recent years, raising the fear that small incidents could spiral out of control and lead to military confrontations. Disputes over history and conflicting territorial claims to small outlying islands have raised nationalist fervors in the region. While tension between Japan and China over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands has been very high over the past year, it is the inter-Korean maritime dispute over the Northern Limit Line in the West Sea that has actually led to military clashes on several occasions. North Korea's continuing progress in developing nuclear weapons and long-range missiles deeply threatens the security of the region, while South Korea's recent vow to retaliate against a new North Korean provocation by striking "not only the origin of provocation and its supporting forces but also its command leadership"² further increases instability and the risk of war by misadventure.

Prioritization of Foreign Policy Issues

Throughout the Cold War, the top foreign policy priority of the United States was unambiguous: mitigating the geopolitical threat of the Soviet Union. In this bipolar power system, the Helsinki Process was just one of the tools by which the U.S. used diplomatic engagement to manage and reduce the risks posed by the USSR. For example, in addition to the Helsinki Process, the U.S. pursued rapprochement with China, engaged in arms control negotiations, and authorized commercial activities such as grain exports to the USSR.

Today, the U.S. does not have such an overriding policy priority, and Northeast Asia is just one of several regions of strategic importance to the United States. While U.S. troops have withdrawn from Iraq and will soon withdraw from Afghanistan, events in the Middle East continue to receive the most high-level attention from policymakers. The U.S. rebalance to Asia is focused more on Southeast Asia than on Japan or Korea, and as instability has increased on the Korean Peninsula, the State Department has eliminated a high-level staff position working on North Korea.

Yet Northeast Asia now faces three major points of tension – on the Korean peninsula, in Sino-Japanese relations, and to a lesser extent in South Korean-Japanese relations – that could potentially interact with each other in ways that could cause spikes in tensions and make it harder to ensure that crisis situations do not spin out of control. Furthermore, as the center of the global economy shifts toward Asia, the geo-economic considerations of regional instability are profound. A Helsinki-like process could shift the emphasis from

² Maj. Gen. Kim Yong-hyun, quoted in Choe Sang-hun, "South Korea Pushes Back on North's Threats," *New York Times*, March 6, 2013.

regional bilateral relationships to regional multilateral solutions, but getting to this point will require the sustained attention and effort of the United States.

Multiple Agreements Prior to the Helsinki Final Act Created Momentum

During the Cold War, several gradual steps between the two Germanys (German rapprochement was an essential component of greater regional initiatives) and between the two blocs created the conditions that allowed for the CSCE dialogue to begin in 1973 and conclude with the Final Act in 1975. These steps included early cultural and educational exchanges, and gained pace in 1963 with the Limited Test Ban Treaty and the Christmas border pass agreement in Berlin. Beginning in the early 1970s, the two sides reached a series of diplomatic breakthroughs, including the abandonment of the Hallstein Doctrine blocking third countries from establishing diplomatic relations with both East and West Germany,³ the Four Party Agreement on Berlin in 1971, the 1972 Salt I agreements, and the Basic Treaty between the two Germanys, ratified in 1973. By defusing specific points of tension and quieting the arms race, these agreements set the stage for broader engagement on security, trade, and humanitarian issues between East and West.

Northeast Asia does not have a strong historical tradition of multilateralism, although the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Asia-Europe Meeting, ASEAN Plus Three, the Shangri-La Dialogue and the East Asia Summit could serve as a foundation for future regional organizations with broader capacities. In addition, the annual China–Japan–South Korea trilateral summit holds hope for improving trilateral coordination among the three countries and increasing cooperation and peace in the region.⁴

However, many of the security agreements underpinning diplomatic relations in Northeast Asia face significant challenges. The treaty establishing diplomatic relations between South Korea and Japan in 1965 did not address the issue of comfort women during World War II, or the status of the Dokdo/Takeshima islets – two disputes that haunt ROK–Japan relations today. Similarly, Japan’s treaty establishing relations with the PRC ignored the Senkakus/Diaoyu dispute.

³ The U.S. and the GDR established diplomatic relations in 1974.

⁴ In 2011 a Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat was established in Seoul, making it the regional forum with the most well-established support structure.

Security arrangements on the Korean Peninsula are particularly problematic. The Korean War never officially ended: each half of the Korean Peninsula claims sovereignty over its entirety, and the U.S. has not established diplomatic relations with the DPRK. Earlier this year, North Korea declared the Armistice Agreement that ended fighting in the Korean War “completely nullified.”⁵

Several of the major agreements on the Korean Peninsula, such as the September 19, 2005 Joint Statement on Denuclearization or the joint statements from the two inter-Korean summits, demonstrated initial successes. For example, the Northeast Asia Peace and Security Working Group established as part of the Six Party Talks created a set of guiding principles, agreed to by all six parties, that included parameters for developing peace-building and confidence-building mechanisms which were based to a large extent on the Helsinki Final Act, the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.⁶ However, none of the major agreements on the Korean Peninsula have been fully implemented and they have therefore lost momentum; in many cases both sides have failed to live up to their obligations. The critical question is why and how these agreements have lost momentum, and how to change that calculus moving forward.

Foreign Policy Consistency

The development of a consistent, nonpartisan West German policy toward East Germany was a necessary element of rapprochement between them. Ostpolitik, a policy to improve West Germany’s relations with East Germany, Poland, and the Soviet Union, was developed under the leadership of Social Democrats, including Chancellor Willy Brandt. It initially faced many challenges from opposition parties, particularly the Christian Democratic Union. However, Brandt was re-elected in 1972 and the Berlin Treaty was ratified in 1973. Helmut Schmidt, also a Social Democrat, became Chancellor in 1974 and signed the Final Act the following year. After the West German opposition regained power in 1982, Chancellor Helmut Kohl pursued a similar policy line toward the GDR, maintaining continuity in inter-German relations. U.S. policy in support of German rapprochement also remained consistent in spite of increasing tension with the Soviet Union over security and human rights issues.

In contrast, South Korea’s North Korea policy has been partisan and inconsistent. South Korean policy changed drastically between the conciliatory “Sunshine Policy” of President Kim Dae-Jung and the succeeding

⁵ “US, S. Korea to be Held Accountable for Catastrophic Consequences: CPRK,” *Korea Central News Agency*, March 11, 2013.

⁶ Frances Mautner-Markhoff, personal communication, December 8, 2013.

“Peace and Prosperity Policy” of Roh Moo-Hyun (1998-2008) and the more confrontational approach of President Lee Myung-Bak (2008-2013). President Park Geun-Hye has vowed to seek a balanced approach,⁷ and some hope that she will ultimately be able to forge a policy that garners greater support throughout the Korean Peninsula and that can be sustained through future administrations.

U.S. policy toward North Korea has also seen dramatic shifts, particularly when new administrations have taken office. Skeptical of the Clinton administration’s diplomacy with North Korea, the Bush administration announced a North Korea policy review early in its tenure, and took an anti-engagement approach for several years before adjusting its policy during Bush’s second term. And as the Obama administration’s former NSC staffer Jeff Bader recounts in his book, he rejected in early 2009 a proposed message from Secretary Clinton to North Korea that “focused mainly on the policy pursued by the Bush administration in its final weeks, so as to provide the North Koreans with a sense of continuity in policy.” Bader argued that “the new president and the new national security team... deserved a chance to consider the direction we were going in before the bureaucracy attempted to tie us to existing processes and policies.”⁸ No regional process has a hope of succeeding until U.S. and South Korean policy have a chance to last beyond a presidential administration.

Regional Commitment to Economic Integration

The momentum created in Europe by the Helsinki Process persisted and had a profound impact on how the region viewed itself, even after Cold War tensions began to flare up again in the early 1980s. The process of gradual economic integration between Western Europe and the Eastern Bloc created a set of overlapping interests that rusted holes into the iron curtain. Western European governments, for example, stood firm in their support for an energy pipeline linking Europe and the Soviet Union despite criticism of the project, calculating correctly that the USSR’s economic motivations would outweigh the possibility that it would begin using the pipeline for political leverage.

⁷ President Park’s strategy towards the DPRK is known as *trustpolitik*. For further reading see, Park Geun-Hye, “A New Kind of Korea: Building Trust Between Seoul and Pyongyang,” *Foreign Affairs* (September 2011).

⁸ Jeffrey A. Bader, *Obama and China’s Rise: An Insider’s Account of America’s Asia Strategy* (Brookings Institution Press, 2012), Google Play edition, 70. Bader sought a policy toward the DPRK that was more consultative with the other four parties in the Six Party talks.

Growing economic ties between the countries of Northeast Asia, however, have not dampened political tensions in the region – a problem that President Park Geun-Hye has called the “Asia Paradox.”⁹ North Korea is the outlier in the region’s economic success story, although China’s economic ties to the DPRK are deepening and inter-Korean trade is also rebounding after the restoration of the Kaesong Industrial Complex (though not yet to pre-suspensions levels). Given the U.S. emphasis on sanctions, there has been some friction between the U.S. and its partners in the region over economic engagement with the DPRK, and if the Park government succeeds in its goal of expanding inter-Korean economic relations, more of this tension can be anticipated in the future. Nonetheless, a multilateral process that pursues regional economic cooperation could be a stabilizing force. Rail or pipeline infrastructure connecting the two Koreas to their neighbors would be in the economic interest of all parties in the region; although current levels of mistrust on the Peninsula run too deep for this sort of large-scale project to be feasible today, it stands as an example of what could be accomplished if some security concerns were alleviated.

Willingness to Compromise

The Helsinki Process began with a proposal from the USSR to finalize post-WWII boundaries and guarantee territorial integrity, a proposal which was initially viewed with suspicion by the West. Neither the U.S. nor its allies were eager to set boundaries, but because the dialogue included topics that were primarily in their interest, such as human rights and economic engagement, the West was willing to negotiate. All participants in the Helsinki Process were there not to engage in dialogue for its own sake, not to appease the other side, but to further their own goals.

In order to apply a Helsinki-like process to East Asia, the mechanism will need to bring everybody’s concerns to the table. Doing this will require compromises, and will not always be easy politically. First, the U.S. and China will need to find more common ground in their stances toward North Korea – currently, there is an overlap in many fundamental interests, but not in priorities or tactics. Second, the U.S. and its partners in the region need to re-examine the incentives that have been offered to the DPRK in exchange for denuclearization, and be willing to find creative ways to break out of the current stalemate on the issue.

Political Will

⁹ President Park Geun-Hye, “Speech to Joint Session of Congress,” May 8, 2013. Accessed on December 6, 2013 at http://www.ncnk.org/resources/publications/President_Park_speech_at_US_Congress.pdf/

Although the Helsinki Process is today seen as a successful initiative, it is worth recalling that the Final Act was controversial in its time, and the Cold War tensions that re-emerged in the years afterwards cast doubt on its relevance. In signing the Helsinki Accords, President Ford withstood criticism from Congress and the public on human rights and border issues, and this gambit paid off in the long run. Similarly, the development of a multilateral security framework in Northeast Asia will be a long-term process, and there will undoubtedly be bumps along the road. It will entail taking political risks to get a meaningful agreement and implementation of that agreement, but merely continuing to go along with the status quo in Northeast Asia would ultimately be the far greater risk.

It is also important to recall that U.S. allies in Western Europe played a more central role in moving the Helsinki Process forward than did the United States. This didn't make the U.S. security commitment to Europe any less credible or its political influence less relevant, but rather reflected a strong partnership and trust among allies as well as the European experience prior to World War II. As Northeast Asia is less integrated as a cohesive region than Europe, the U.S. may play a larger role in shaping a multilateral security dialogue. However, the impetus for such a process needs to come from within the region as well. President Park's call for a "Northeast Asian Peace and Cooperation Initiative" that would initially focus on regional confidence-building measures is a good start, and the U.S. should strongly signal its support for such a mechanism.

Asia Today

The Helsinki Process spurred an uptick in private society initiatives and exchanges, and this may be the most important lesson we can look at today: what civil society initiatives are already taking place in the DPRK, and how can we support their expansion. The U.S. should support private sector and civil society initiatives by regularizing its visa process, remaining open to perspectives gained through Track II dialogue, lending support to humanitarian initiatives and person-to-person exchanges, and supporting regional initiatives.

Private Sector Activities: People-To-People Exchanges

President Ford's comments before leaving for Europe to attend the OSCE Conference where he would sign the Final Act in 1975 reflected a confidence in the positive impact and power of people-to-people exchanges:

The fact that these very different governments can agree, even on paper, to such principles as greater human contacts and exchanges, improved conditions for journalists, reunification for families and

international marriages, a freer flow of information and publications, and increased tourism and travel, seems to me a development worthy of positive and public encouragement by the United States.¹⁰

By that time the U.S. and the Soviet Union had been participating in academic and cultural exchanges for two decades, while science and technology exchanges began in the 1972-74 period. The Final Act aimed to facilitate an expansion of such activities.

Less than two years after the Final Act was signed, the U.S. Helsinki Commission convened a hearing to assess its implementation. Joseph Duffey, Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, noted that other Final Act provisions broke new ground, but that since educational and cultural exchanges were already taking place the most significant impact was to expand exchanges at the nongovernmental level:

The Final Act has confirmed, on a high political level, the legitimacy of these programs which we have been conducting for the past 20 years. Since the signing of the Final Act, we have sought to expand these activities for the most part under bilateral arrangements with these countries... We have assisted private American institutions in establishing exchanges, working closely with them, providing advice when it has been sought, and in some cases, partial funding through grants-in-aid... The most promising development is direct contacts between universities in the United States, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.¹¹

While the U.S. had a gradually growing array of private contacts and exchanges with the Soviet Union throughout most of the Cold War, there was only a minor presence of NGOs or UN agencies in North Korea until 1995 and 1996, after North Korea issued its first appeal for international assistance.¹² Humanitarian aid efforts expanded rapidly in the 1990s in response to the North Korean famine, and in following years a handful

¹⁰ Gerald R. Ford, "Text of Remarks at a Meeting with Representatives of European Background Concerning the Conference and Security and Cooperation in Europe," July 25, 1975, in Gerald R. Ford, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1975), Book Two, 1033.

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/p/ppotpus/4732052.1975.002/103?page=root;size=100;view=image;q1=Gerald+Ford>.

¹¹ Joseph Duffey, Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, *Implementation of the Helsinki Accords: Volume III, Information Flow, and Cultural and Educational Exchanges, May 19, 24 and 25 1977*, 95th Cong., 1st sess., (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1977), 16-18

¹² For more information on humanitarian assistance to North Korea see, Karin J. Lee, "The United States Humanitarian Experience in the DPRK, 1996 to 2009 - U.S. NGOs, the U.S. Administration and Congress," November 2007.

http://www.ncnk.org/resources/publications/Humanitarian-Conf-2009_Karin-Lee_US_Humanitarian_Experience.pdf

of U.S. and other NGOs remained in the DPRK developing agricultural, medical and capacity-building programs.

Ongoing Civil Society Initiatives in North Korea

The Engage DPRK mapping initiative is a tool that demonstrates the range of private sector activities that have taken place in North Korea. It was recently developed by Jiehae Blackman to “help those who want work inside the country by illustrating the different foreign engagement activities that have taken place inside the DPRK.” According to the www.EngageDPRK.org website, “By identifying the various foreign activities throughout the country, ranging from noodle factories and retail stores to goat farms and vaccination programs, we endeavor to gain deeper insight into the living conditions of local communities, the kinds of projects that are possible, and the types of working relationships between foreigners and the DPRK government and citizens that make for successful, sustainable projects.”

The initiative draws mainly from publically available information and therefore cannot be considered comprehensive; there are a number of activities that take place with little or no public profile. Even so, the results may be surprising to most Americans: for the 18 years covered by this project (1995-2012) the initiative was able to identify 4,4000 activities implemented as part of approximately 1,100 discreet projects carried out by 480 organizations coming from 29 different countries as well as the UN and other international agencies. These projects include humanitarian relief (assistance meeting immediate needs in health, nutrition, and emergency relief/rehabilitation), development assistance (meeting long-term needs), educational assistance (addressing educational needs for the general public), professional training (standalone introductions to new thoughts and principles, separate from capacity building), and business activities. Sports and cultural exchanges were not included in this project.

The initiative provides a public interactive map on its website identifying the locations where these projects are being implemented throughout the country. Each project has been broken down into “activities,” which are what users are able to see on the interactive map. Information was only uploaded when complete data was available; if data was missing (for example, the starting and ending dates), information about the activity was not included on the map. Because of this, information is less readily available in the early years covered by the initiative. Furthermore, only a fraction of Chinese businesses were included because information on their activities was incomplete.

As can be seen in the screen shots in the appendix of all non-business activities shown on the map, there has been a high concentration of activities in areas such as Pyongyang, South Pyongan, North Pyongan, North

Hwanghae, South Hamgyong, and Kangwon Provinces. Such areas typically have high concentrations of population, are particularly vulnerable to flooding, or experience greater food insecurity because of lack of access to farms or markets. Many of the concentrations of activities also represent sites where an NGO, INGO or UN agency has worked long term with a particular community, farm, orphanage, hospital or clinic on projects to enhance food security (such as through an agricultural project or a food production facility) or on a medical project.

As noted, this map captures some of the private sector activities from 29 countries, including the United States. Here are a few examples.

World Vision: Access to Clean Water

World Vision's community development project in Dochi-Ri, a community of 12,000, increases access to clean water through building water systems and providing solar energy to provide electricity for the school and clinic as well local residents. World Vision also works to reduce malnutrition by providing school children with daily lunches. World Vision began its work in the DPRK in 1995 in response to a DPRK request for aid. Since then, they have provided noodle factories with equipment and supplies to produce meals for thousands of people, helped agriculture and health systems recover following the 1998 floods, and built greenhouses to improve vegetable production.¹³

American Friends Service Committee: Improving Farming Techniques

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) works with the Academy of Agricultural Science and four farms on programs tailored to the specific conditions of each farm, with an emphasis on experimenting with different farming methods to increase food production and to protect soil fertility. Most recently, AFSC has been training farmers in a new cultivation method that requires 25% of the seed and fertilizer normally used for seed-bed preparation and that also decreased the labor input needed for transplanting. The new method increases yields by 0.5 to 1 ton per hectare. Like other U.S. NGOs, AFSC has built unheated greenhouses, which can grow crops even in winter, bringing variety to the diet; the extra vegetable harvests also generate income for the farm, which is used to purchase necessary inputs such as tires and fuel. AFSC also brings farmers to China for study tours to introduce new farming methods. A farm manager notes that the cooperative farms with which AFSC works are the "model farms" in their counties:

¹³ World Vision Website, <http://www.worldvision.org/our-impact/country-profiles/north-korea>; Victor Hsu, "A DPRK-Shangri-la," January 2009. <http://www.ncnk.org/resources/newsletter-content-items/ncnk-newsletter-vol-2-no-1-a-dprk-shangrila>

“The government does field trips to our farms, we have visits by other farmers – so our country has ways of disseminating new ideas and ways of sharing knowledge.”¹⁴

Pyongyang University of Science and Technology

Founded by Korean-American Chin-Kyung “James” Kim, the Pyongyang University of Science and Technology (PUST) is the first private university in the DPRK. Originally conceived in 2001, its construction took nearly a decade. According to its Facebook page, President Kim started the school “with a group of evangelical Christians who have a heart and prayer to make an eternal impact in North Korea by educating its future leaders”;¹⁵ it is funded by churches and received a one-time donation from the South Korean government of one million U.S. dollars.

The 230-acre campus, with 17 buildings, held its first classes in October 2010. PUST currently has three schools: Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Industry and Management (IM), and Agriculture, Food and Life Sciences (AFL).¹⁶ Plans for a new School of Public Healthcare were discussed at the second international conference at PUST this past October, which featured researchers from the UK, Australia and the United States, as well as PUST graduate students presenting “their interdisciplinary research integrating medical science, public health, and their own discipline in science and technology.” All academic offerings have been designed to apply to purely civilian applications.

PUST currently has about 400 undergraduates and 110 graduate students and plans to eventually expand enrollment to 2,000 students. A handful of PUST graduates have studied abroad or are currently studying at Sweden’s Uppsala University and Britain’s University of Westminster and Cambridge University.

University of British Columbia Knowledge Partnership Program

¹⁴ AFSC Website: <https://afsc.org/story/strawberries-winter-afscs-program-north-korea>; <https://afsc.org/video/improving-rice-production-north-korea-dprk>; <https://afsc.org/story/bringing-sustainable-farming-farmers-together-china>.

¹⁵ PUST Facebook Page; <https://www.facebook.com/pustkp>.

¹⁶ Michael Alison Chandler, “Private University in North Korea Offers Lessons in Science and World Peace,” *Washington Post*, October 7, 2011.

The University of British Columbia (UBC) established the Canada-DPRK Knowledge Partnership Program (KPP) in 2010, the first and only academic exchange program with North Korea in North America of its type. Each year the KPP brings North Korean university professors to UBC for a six-month study program at UBC on topics such as modern economic theory, finance, trade, and business practices. The North Korean professors also study English and attend culture classes. The North Korean scholars have come from Kim Il Sung University, Wonsan Economic University, the University of National Economy and the Pyongyang University of Foreign Studies. UBC Professor Kyung-Ae Park, who founded the KPP program, noted in an interview with the Korea Times that “It is too early to measure the overall impact of the KPP as it is only in its third year. The KPP provides a non-political forum for open dialogue with North Koreans on a variety of issues to build North Korea’s confidence in engagement with educational institutions and allow the formation of meaningful personal and institutional relationships.”¹⁷

Track II Dialogue

Because official dialogue with the DPRK is sometimes strained or impossible, the nongovernment sector also engages with North Koreans on security matters in Track II or Track 1.5 dialogue.¹⁸ A handful of these dialogues have been taking place for over a decade, with several organizations hosting them at regular intervals. Some programs are primarily bilateral or focused on the DPRK, such as several dialogues held this fall which sought to test the possibility of the resumption of negotiations over the DPRK’s nuclear and missile programs. Others are multilateral, such as the Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue (NEACD), which brings together academics and officials from each of the Six Party Talks countries to informally discuss regional issues and cooperation, including issues related to the DPRK. The Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP), another multilateral forum that includes the DPRK, similarly addresses regional security, but involves participants from a wider range of countries and covers a broader scope of issues.

Some Track II dialogues have turned out to be valuable adjuncts to official diplomacy: for example both DPRK and US diplomats credited the June 30-July 1, 2005 National Committee on American Foreign Policy meeting with helping to restart Six Party Talks. U.S. Special Envoy Joseph DeTrani thanked organizers for playing a critical role in “getting this process back in motion,” and North Korea's Ambassador Han Song Ryol

¹⁷Chung Ah-young, “NK crucial for expanding Korean studies.” *The Korea Times*, October 27, 2013.

¹⁸ “Track I” refers to official meetings between or among official representatives from two or more governments. “Track II” is used to describe talks and meetings regarding policy issues at which there is no official government presence; Track 1.5 refers to unofficial dialogue with government officials participating in a non-official capacity. This section draws from Karin J. Lee, “NCNK Newsletter Vol. 1 No. 6: The DPRK and Track II Exchanges,” November 6, 2008.

said the meetings “provided [the] decisive breakthrough for the resumption of the nuclear six-party talks.”¹⁹ On some occasions, Track II activities have also been used for sending important messages, such as North Korea’s revelation in 2010 of its surprisingly advanced uranium enrichment program.

While most Track II dialogues do not lead to such major developments, regular meetings with DPRK officials can allow for much more direct insight into North Korean thinking on foreign policy than one can get by reading statements published by the DPRK’s state-run news media. For example, a Track II event held in the summer of 2012 accurately indicated North Korea’s stance over the following year. Much of the benefit of Track II also comes from two sides establishing relationships and familiarity with one another over time. Short-term results in any Track II format (not only those involving North Korea) are rare, according to Dr. Ronald Fisher from American University; he says that “Most of the successful interventions in this field involve a continuing series of interactions or workshops over time – sometimes ten years or more.”²⁰

Government Support

One interesting point of comparison between the Eastern Bloc and Northeast Asia is the amount of U.S. government involvement in Basket III (humanitarian) activities. As noted above, government-sponsored programming with the Soviet bloc actually preceded the private-sector engagement proposed in the Final Act. Once the Final Act was signed, U.S. government and private sector officials could turn to the U.S. Helsinki Commission both for help overcoming obstacles and funding.²¹

In Northeast Asia, many governments, including the United States, have forged and continue to participate in exchanges – after all, the U.S.-China Ping Pong Diplomacy preceded the Helsinki Final Act by half a decade. The programs throughout the region are too numerous to review.

¹⁹ "The U.S. and North Korea: A Track II Meeting Brings Results" The Carnegie Reporter, Vol. 3, No. 3, Fall 2005. <http://carnegie.org/publications/carnegie-reporter/single/view/article/item/145/>.

²⁰ M. J. Zuckerman. "Track II Diplomacy: Can Unofficial Talks Avert Disaster?" The Carnegie Reporter, Vol. 3, No. 3, Fall 2005. <http://carnegie.org/publications/carnegie-reporter/single/view/article/item/136/>.

²¹ Allan H. Kassoff, director of International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX), commented that since IREX was founded in 1968 it had become a “major channel for advanced research between the US and the Soviet countries” but that obstacles still remained – primarily in regard to access to information for western scholars. Kassoff hoped that the Commission could help to resolve these issues. Hearings before the CSCE, *op cit.*, p. 72.

However, government-initiated exchanges with North Korea are much less robust, although EU countries have supported some development and training activities.²² Not all of these programs have endured. After providing humanitarian relief in 1995 in response to the famine, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation opened an office in Pyongyang in 1997, and began to implement a range of development projects, including running the Pyongyang Business School. But beginning in 2012, the SDC ended its development work and now implements “a purely humanitarian programme” in the DPRK, which aims to “to improve food and income security, water supplies, waste water management and protection of the environment.”²³

The U.S. government was the major donor of humanitarian assistance to the DPRK during the famine years, and also provided some funding for exchange programs in the years immediately following the Agreed Framework. However, beyond that, U.S. support for Basket III-type exchanges has been inconsistent.

The most fundamental area where the U.S. government could support private exchanges is the issuance of visas for North Koreans to visit the United States. Whereas one of the key tenets of the Helsinki Final Act was that progress in one area would be delinked from progress in other areas, for most of the last two decades the U.S. policy has been to approve visas as an incentive or reward to the DPRK, while denying them to signal U.S. displeasure or to mete out symbolic “punishment.”

This practice of using visa approvals as part of the carrot-and-stick approach has been employed by both Republican and Democratic administrations, and has not been across the board; during some periods, for example, visas have been generally been routinely approved for humanitarian and academic programs. However, visas are considerably less routinely approved for political and cultural events, and approval of visits to Washington, DC has been rare.

Cultural exchanges provide a good example of the sharp contrast between U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union in the ‘60s and ‘70s and current U.S. policy toward the DPRK. The visit of the New York Philharmonic to Pyongyang in 2008 was the most-widely reported visit of a U.S. music group to the DPRK, although it was

²² For example, Handicapped International’s work in the DPRK is supported by the Dutch Embassy, the Belgian Direction Générale de la Coopération au Développement, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and other sources. <http://www.handicapinternational.be/en/dpr-korea>; North Koreans have also attended SIDA’s short-term training programs, etc...

²³ SDC website, <http://www.swiss-cooperation.admin.ch/northkorea/>

just one of many U.S. musical groups non-governmental organizations have brought to perform in the DPRK.²⁴ At the time of the New York Philharmonic's performance, musicians and organizers in both countries hoped to arrange a reciprocal visit by a North Korean orchestra to the United States. However, although DPRK orchestras have performed in several European countries,²⁵ they have not performed in the United States because U.S. visas have not been granted.

U.S. government officials have explained that issuing visas is “one of the few points of leverage” the U.S. government has over the DPRK.²⁶ Yet the practice has had no effect on core DPRK policies. It has, however, undermined serious efforts to bring the fullest possible number of North Koreans to this country and introduce them to the realities of American society and culture.

The uncertainty of obtaining visas for North Koreans means that many civil society organizations will not invite North Korean groups to the U.S. unless they feel some confidence that visas will be issued; this dynamic has closed doors for exchanges in which North Koreans could have visited the United States and gained exposure to the breadth and diversity of the American experience.

Without a doubt, U.S. safety and security interests must be of primary concern. No North Korean should be allowed to enter the U.S. without thorough vetting. And there are specific, limited instances – such as requests to visit by DPRK officials at a particularly delicate time – when denial of visas may have symbolic and tactical utility. However, depoliticizing this issue would quietly remove a serious obstacle to broader and more regular exchanges at the interpersonal, cultural, educational, and professional levels.

Next Steps: Regional Networks

As the private sector considers next steps, one area for growth may be regional programming on a range of humanitarian and environmental issues. As noted above, one of the sharpest contrasts between Europe in the

²⁴ Other U.S. musicians who have performed in Pyongyang include chamber music, blue grass, Christian rock (the twice-platinum Grammy-award band Casting Crowns won an award for their performance of *Amazing Grace* in Pyongyang), and a 150-man male chorus comprised primarily of ministers of music serving in Georgia Baptist Convention Churches, The Sons of Jubal. See Karin J. Lee, “The New York Philharmonic in North Korea. A New Page in US-DPRK Relations?” *Japan Focus*, March 11, 2008. http://www.japanfocus.org/-Karin_J_-Lee/2694#sthash.Hw4gpNdn.dpuf, also <https://castingcrowns.com/node/626> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOh6Hd9c3Qk&noredirect=1>.

²⁵ See for example David Ng, “Orchestras from North Korea, France perform concert in Paris.” *Los Angeles Times*, March 15, 2012.

²⁶ Personal communication, multiple officials on different occasions.

1970s and Northeast Asia today is the negative trajectory of regional disputes. While governments in Northeast Asia obviously have the key responsibility for overcoming these divisions and resolving or at the least diminishing the intensity of territorial disputes, regional bodies working on apolitical topics of mutual interest may prove a way to build a foundation for regional collaboration at a higher level.

In this regard, some practitioners believe that scientific exchanges and “science diplomacy” may be of particular value in building bridges.²⁷ One key reason is that the value to every country is indisputable; participation takes place out of pure self-interest. Positive outcomes in improving cooperation and communication beyond the topic of the exchange or cooperation program would be a welcome ancillary benefit but is not necessary for the program to succeed. Thus, although activities such as these may start out as civil society efforts, they could evolve into initiatives involving support and participation from the U.S. government in the future.

Mt. Paektu/Changbaishan: Volcano Research

Environmental issues provide a rich area for exchanges, especially when linked to disasters that have the potential to cause cross-border destruction like typhoons, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Mt. Paektu, (also known as Changbaishan, Mt. Baekdu and Baitoushan), an active volcano which straddles the Chinese/North Korean border, provides a useful example of the kind of collaboration that is possible when all sides have an inherent interest in an issue.

As became obvious with the April 2010 volcanic eruption in Iceland, volcanic ash recognizes no borders. Mt. Paektu is “considered to be the most dangerous volcano in China due to its history of large explosive eruptions.”²⁸ Recent Chinese research has detected “anomalous activity,” resulting in a call for “further research on monitoring this active volcano to reduce hazards and risks of future eruptions.”²⁹ China would face the greatest threat from flood damage or “lahars” (a mixture of water and volcanic ash --the lake holds 2 billion tons of water and the outlet is on the Chinese side of the border), and both sides are at risk from

²⁷ For useful discussions of science cooperation with the DPRK, see Stuart J. Thorson, Frederick F. Carriere, Jongwoo Han, and Thomas D. Harblin, "Notes on the SU-KCUT Research Collaboration and Exchange Program," and Linda Staheli, "U.S. Science Engagement Consortium," both in Gi-Wook Shin and Karin J. Lee, eds., *U.S.-DPRK Educational Exchanges: Assessment and Future Strategy*, (Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center Books, 2011). http://iis-db.stanford.edu/pubs/23213/US_DPRK_Educational_Exchanges.pdf.

²⁸ John Seach, Baitoushan Volcano. Volcano Live. <http://www.volcanolive.com/baitoushan.html>.

²⁹ Lingyun Ji, Jiandong Xu, Qingliang Wang, and Yuan Wan, “Episodic Deformation at Changbaishan Tianchi Volcano, Northeast China During 2004 to 2010, Observed by Persistent Scatterer Interferometric Synthetic Aperture Radar,” *Journal of Applied Remote Sensing*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (October 4, 2013).

pyroclastic flows. Furthermore, depending on the season and the weather, volcanic ash could engulf North Korea and fall on Japan or Vladivostok.³⁰ A Chinese research paper from 2003 noted that Changbaishan, along with two other active volcanos in China, “pose a significant threat to hundreds of thousands of people and [would be] likely to cause substantial economic losses.”³¹

Mt. Paektu’s location straddling an international border makes it particularly appropriate for international scientific collaboration. Projects designed to characterize the volcano, monitoring efforts, and planning of future eruption scenarios require gathering and sharing data across political borders; comprehensive information sharing increases the chances of a robust response to any volcanic activity.

According to Dr. James Hammond, NERC Research Fellow, Department of Earth Science and Engineering, Imperial College London, “Because of the lack of politics involved in understanding a potentially hazardous volcano, this topic has already generated significant international cooperation, including North Korean participation in some bilateral and regional meetings.” For example, in 2011, under the Lee Myung Bak administration, the two Koreas held two “expert meetings” to discuss the volcano, although the proposed plans to hold a joint seminar and conduct a joint field trip to Mt. Paektu were never realized. That same year, the American Association for the Advancement of Science began a scientific collaboration project with the DPRK on Mt. Paektu’s seismic activity. The UK’s Royal Society joined the project in 2013, with participation by the Imperial College London and University of Cambridge.³²

Yet North Korea is not a regular participant in regional bodies focused on environmental disaster preparedness. For example, the Asia-Pacific Region Global Earthquake and Volcano Eruption Risk Management Hub, established following the 2011 Tohoku Earthquake, includes strong representation from most Asian nations, including both China and Taiwan, as well as representative institutions from France and the

³⁰ Richard Stone and James Hammond, personal communications, December 7-8, 2013. See also Jiandong Xu et al., “Recent Unrest of Changbaishan Volcano, Northeast China: A Precursor of a Future Eruption?” *Geophysical Research Letters*, Vol. 39, No. 16 (August 28, 2012); and Haiquan Wei, Guoming Liu, James Gill, “Review of Eruptive Activity at Tianchi Volcano, Changbaishan, Northeast China: Implications for Possible Future Eruptions,” *Bulletin of Volcanology*, Vol. 75, No. 4 (April 2013).

³¹ H. Wei et al., “Three Active Volcanoes in China and Their Hazards,” *Journal of Asian Earth Sciences*, Vol. 21, No. 5 (February 2003), pp. 515-526.

³² Megan Phelan, “New Partners Keep Watch Over North Korean Volcano,” American Association for the Advancement of Science website, September 5, 2013. <http://www.aaas.org/news/new-partners-keep-watch-over-north-korean-volcano>.

United Kingdom. However, the DPRK is not on the membership list.³³ A field trip of volcano experts to the Chinese side of Changbaishan/Mt. Paektu this past July did not include North Korean participants.

Dr. Un Young Gun, the Vice Director of the DPRK Earthquake Bureau, was the lead author of a paper presented at International Association of Volcanology and Chemistry of the Earth's Interior (IAVCEI), the world's biggest and most high profile volcanology conference. The paper had four other Korean authors along with authors from the United Kingdom and the United States.³⁴ However no North Koreans attended the actual conference, which took place this past July in Kagoshima, Japan.

Institutionalizing North Korea participation in regional and bilateral research would increase exchange of critical information and improve disaster preparedness, providing an immediate benefit to all countries concerned. Doing so could also provide an ancillary benefit of strengthening regional collaboration.

Medical Consortiums

Another particularly beneficial area for scientific exchange could be medical consortiums, as demonstrated by the Middle East Consortium on Infectious Disease Surveillance (MECIDS). This consortium, which was established by the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) in 2003, is composed of public health experts and Ministry of Health officials from Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinian Authority. The initiative has been quite successful, and members have overcome political divides in order to address the common threat of infectious disease emerging in the region.³⁵ In 2006, the MECIDS network mitigated an avian influenza outbreak in just 10 days, and during the 2009 H1N1 outbreak, Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian health officials held an emergency teleconference to discuss a joint action plan two days *before* the World Health Organization (WHO) call for collaborative efforts to address the emergency.

Medical cooperation in Northeast Asia is weak, and the DPRK is not included in relevant existing medical networks. For example, the DPRK is considered to be a part of the WHO Southeast Asia Region along with India and Thailand, whereas China, Japan, Mongolia, and the Republic of Korea are all members of the WHO

³³ <http://g-ever.org/en/institute/index.html>

³⁴ Un Young Gun, Ju Un Ok, Kim Myong Song, Ri Gyong Song, Ri Kyong Nam, James OS Hammond, Clive Oppenheimer, Kathy Whaler, Steve Park, Graham Dawes, and Kayla Iacovin, "The Mt. Paektu Geoscientific Experiment," IAVCEI 2013 Scientific Assembly, Kagoshima, Japan, July 20-24, 2013. http://www.iavcei2013.com/iavcei_hp/PDF/3W_3C-P23.pdf.

³⁵ NTI website, Middle East Consortium on Infectious Disease Surveillance, <http://www.nti.org/about/projects/middle-east-consortium-infectious-disease-surveillance/>. See also the MECIDS website, <http://www.mecidsnetwork.org/>.

Western Pacific Region.³⁶ In addition to founding MECIDS, NTI founded two other regional networks, one in Southern Africa and one in Southeast Asia, which they have brought together under the Connecting Organizations for Regional Disease Surveillance (CORDS). However, no similar network has been formed in Northeast Asia.³⁷ And APEC economies participate in the Asia Pacific Emerging Infections Network (AP-EINet) convened to foster transparency, communication, and collaboration in emerging infections in the Asia-Pacific, but since the DPRK is not an APEC economy, it does not participate in the network.³⁸

Yet regional collaboration on infectious disease benefits citizens of all countries. Tuberculosis may be of considerable interest to Northeast Asia, especially given trends in the DPRK. WHO records showed fewer than 50 reported cases of TB per 100,000 people in the DPRK in 1994; by 2011 that number had risen to 380 cases per 100,000.³⁹ Only sub-Saharan Africa has higher reported TB rates. Up to 15% of those patients may have multiple drug-resistant (MDR) TB.

The WHO and the Global Fund are already active in treatment of TB in the DPRK, along with two U.S. NGOs (Christian Friends of Korea (CFK) and the Eugene Bell Foundation) and Stanford University. Since it was founded 15 years ago, the Eugene Bell Foundation has supported 80 medical institutions to allow them to diagnose and treat tuberculosis and improve general health.⁴⁰ In all the towns, cities and districts where they work – they are responsible for over one-third of the population in the DPRK – Eugene Bell has separate facilities for treating MDR-TB. Since 2008, the Eugene Bell Foundation has sent sputum samples from patients it suspects of having MDR-TB to Seoul for testing, and then treats patients accordingly.⁴¹

In addition to providing general medicines and vitamins needed to cure TB and treat other ailments associated with TB and hepatitis, CFK provides hospital equipment, greenhouses and other agricultural inputs, as well as food. They also participate in hospital and rest home renovations and technical upgrades.⁴² CFK has worked with the DPRK's Ministry of Public Health, CFK, and Stanford to establish a National Tuberculosis Reference Laboratory (NTRL) in Pyongyang capable of screening for MDR-TB; NTI was an early collaborator in this project. According to Science Magazine, “NTRL researchers can now diagnose TB cases that are resistant to

³⁶ <http://www.searo.who.int/countries/en/>; <http://www.wpro.who.int/countries/en/>.

³⁷ NTI Website: <http://www.nti.org/about/projects/CORDS/>; http://www.nti.org/media/pdfs/CORDS-strategic-plan_confirmed-final_DL_6-29.pdf

³⁸ AP-EINetwork website, <http://blogs.uw.edu/apecein/#.UqZAbPRDvmY>. See also Ann Marie Kimball, Melinda Moore, Howard Matthew French et. al., “Regional Infectious Disease Surveillance Networks and their Potential to Facilitate the Implementation of the International Health Regulations,” *Med Clin N Am* Vol. 92 (2008), 1459–1471. <http://download.thelancet.com/flatcontentassets/H1N1-flu/surveillance/surveillance-2.pdf>

³⁹ As reported in Meagan Phelan, “Science Reporter in North Korea Investigates Efforts to Fight Tuberculosis.” American Association for the Advancement of Science website, April 25, 2013. http://www.aaas.org/news/releases/2013/0425_korea_tb.shtml. The rise in cases reflects both increased susceptibility to TB during the famine years and improved reporting.

⁴⁰ <http://www.eugenebell.org/english/main.asp?subPage=250>. See also “MDR-TB in North Korea: A Q&A with PIH’s Dr. JK Seung,” *Partners in Health* website, July 19, 2013. <http://www.pih.org/blog/mdr-tuberculosis-north-korea>

⁴¹ Richard Stone, “Public Enemy Number One,” *Science*, Vol. 340, No. 6131 (April 26, 2013), pp. 422-425.

⁴² Christian Friends of Korea website: <http://cfk.org/about-cfk/our-work/>

first-line drug combinations, making it possible to spot patients who need more aggressive therapy. And the lab will soon add capacity to screen for extensively drug-resistant TB, known as XDR—the worst strains, some of which are close to impossible to treat.”⁴³ Stanford University microbiologist Kathleen England is continuing to train the NTRL researchers, hoping to achieve international accreditation, as early as 2015. Regional coordination and collaboration in this work could aid in treating TB in the DPRK and analyzing the spread of MDR-TB.

Conclusion

Enhanced multilateral cooperation is sorely needed to address the many security and humanitarian issues facing Northeast Asia, particularly in regards to North Korea. The historical experience of the Helsinki Process in Cold War Europe clearly demonstrates the many benefits such an arrangement, but the governments of contemporary Northeast Asia and the United States must first take steps to build genuine and lasting trust, and to begin seeing each other as potential partners rather than as rivals or enemies.

Considering the current tensions in Northeast Asia, and especially on the Korean Peninsula, this is not an easy task. But given the risks of the status quo – with tension rising in the region, North Korea continuing its WMD development, and the prospect of an escalatory conflict breaking out on the Korean Peninsula – working toward this goal is strongly in the U.S. interest. Pursuing a regional process of dialogue and routinized cooperation would potentially be both stabilizing, and in the long run, even transformational.

Encouraging greater person-to-person contact and exchanges is a low-risk, low-cost way of starting to move this process forward. NGO activities in the DPRK are addressing unmet humanitarian needs and contributing to the exchange of values and ideas. Cultural and educational exchanges add to the effectiveness of these ongoing efforts. If the Commission agrees with such an approach, then support for such activities in OSCE member countries, including a more regularized visa process in the United States, could be critical. Furthermore, if the countries of the region hope to succeed in establishing a dialogue on the many issues that divide them, cooperation on issues of mutual concern such as disaster preparedness or public health may be a way to build trust and initiate long-term cooperation.

Again, I thank the distinguished members of the Helsinki Commission for inviting me to testify today, and I look forward to your questions.

These remarks reflect my own views and are not necessarily the views of the National Committee on North Korea.

⁴³ Ibid.

Putting People Before Plutonium

Frank Jannuzi

The recent leadership shake-up in Pyongyang has thrust the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) back onto the front pages. And while it is too soon to fully assess what impact the removal of Jang Song Thaek will have on the course of the country, his purge should remind all that North Korea is not a one-dimensional problem. It requires a multi-dimensional solution and an approach by the United States that is more "can-do."

Until recently, one of the less appreciated facets of the conundrum posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) was its human rights record. Yet there should no longer be any doubt about the scale of the unfolding human catastrophe there or that it merits urgent attention.

Amnesty International has chronicled the DPRK's endemic [human rights abuses](#). Millions suffer extreme forms of repression and violations across nearly the entire spectrum of human rights. The government severely restricts freedom of movement, expression, information and association. Food insecurity is widespread, and there are persistent reports of starvation in more remote regions. As confirmed by recent Amnesty International satellite analyses and eye-witness reports, roughly 100,000 people—including children—are arbitrarily held in political [prison camps](#) and other detention facilities where they are subjected to forced labor, denial of food as punishment, torture, and public executions.

In January 2013, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, said that North Korea had "one of the worst – but least understood and reported—human rights situations in the [world](#)." And last March, the UN Human Rights Council launched a Commission of Inquiry to examine allegations of "systemic, widespread and grave" human rights violations inside the DPRK, including crimes against humanity. The Commission will report its findings next spring.

But, of course, the real question is not whether there are human rights abuses taking place in the North. The question is what can be done about them.

Much the same can be said about the North's nuclear conundrum. There is no longer uncertainty about the nature of the problem. In defiance of the United Nations Security Council, the DPRK has produced fissile material, tested three nuclear devices, developed long-range missiles and constructed a modern facility capable of enriching uranium. Comprehensive economic sanctions have neither crippled the DPRK's ability to develop its nuclear arsenal nor persuaded its leaders to change course. In fact, the coercive tactics often favored by the international community—sanctions, diplomatic isolation, travel restrictions, limits on cultural and educational exchanges, suspension of humanitarian assistance and more—have arguably bolstered the legitimacy of those in Pyongyang who fear openness more than isolation.

"Military First" Approach a Failure (and Not Just for Pyongyang)

For the better part of 30 years, the United States and its allies have been trying to convince the DPRK to abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons, with disappointing results. Most efforts, including the 1994 Agreed Framework, at least acknowledged up front that the nuclear issue was enmeshed in larger questions about the past, present, and future of the Korean peninsula. Those issues include ending the Korean War, establishing a permanent peace mechanism on the peninsula and integrating the DPRK into Northeast Asia's economic and political community.

Some initiatives, especially the Republic of Korea's "Sunshine Policy," were also designed to lay the groundwork for the eventual peaceful unification of North and South Korea. More recently, President Park Geun-hye launched her "*Trustpolitik*," recognizing that the North's nuclear weapons program is as much a symptom of underlying security concerns as it is the driver of them. President Park pitched her approach as one designed to separate humanitarian from security issues in the interest of building confidence and creating an atmosphere more conducive to forging peace and denuclearization.

But even while acknowledging the complexity of the challenge, these various attempts to change North Korea's trajectory have mostly been focused on the narrow goal of denuclearization. Framework [agreements](#) have been struck. Cooling towers have been destroyed and international monitoring schemes devised. Leap Day deals have been [crafted](#). All to convince the DPRK that living without nuclear weapons offered a pathway to genuine security preferable to the security offered by hugging a few kilograms of fissile material nestled inside a nuclear weapon.

But few nations, least of all the DPRK, are inclined to disarm first and negotiate peace second. And the few times in recent memory when this approach has been tried cannot offer Pyongyang any encouragement. As Jeffrey Sachs [wrote](#) last spring:

In 2003, Libyan strongman Muammar Qaddafi agreed with the US and Europe to end his pursuit of nuclear and chemical weapons in order to normalize relations with the West. Eight years later, NATO abetted his overthrow and murder. Now we are asking North Korea to end its nuclear program as we once asked of Qaddafi. North Korea's leaders must be wondering what would await them if they agree.

If the United States and North Korea's neighbors hope to convince the DPRK to change course, they will need to keep a few basic facts in mind. First, the international community must not approach talks with the DPRK as if they were surrender negotiations. The leadership of the DPRK must see something of value in the negotiations for them. As President Carter told me before heading to Pyongyang in 1994 to sit down with Kim Il-Sung, "Kim Il-Sung wants my respect, and I'm going to give it to him." Second, while it would surely set back the goal of denuclearization if the international community formally recognized the DPRK as a nuclear weapons power, former Secretary of Defense William Perry's admonition to deal with the DPRK "as it is, not as we would wish it to be" still has merit. The DPRK's nuclear and missile tests have altered the negotiating environment, and to pretend otherwise is folly. Finally, the North may be *sui generis*, but that does not mean that its leaders come from [Mars](#) or that their behavior is impossible to understand. In fact, many DPRK-watchers have good track records predicting how the North is likely to respond to various diplomatic threats or inducements.

These stubborn facts do not bode well for Washington's most recent efforts to convince the DPRK to make a strategic choice to abandon its nuclear capabilities. The Obama Administration is demanding that the DPRK demonstrate its sincere commitment to denuclearization by taking concrete steps in advance of the resumption of Six Party Talks. The DPRK counters that it remains committed to the goals, including denuclearization, enumerated in the 2005 Joint Statement issued by participants in those talks. It seeks resumption of dialogue "without preconditions." If the United States sticks with its current approach, the DPRK is likely to seize the initiative in ways that will only exacerbate existing tensions, perhaps by testing another long-range missile or accelerating efforts to enhance its nuclear capacity [as we are seeing with the restart of its 5 MW reactor at Yongbyon](#).

So, as Secretary of State John Kerry and Ambassador Glynn Davies, the US Special Envoy for North Korea, ponder how best to kick start the moribund Six Party process, they should heed the advice of British Parliamentarian Lord David Alton, chairman of the British-DPRK All-Party Parliamentarian Group,

who recently recommended a nuanced, carefully calibrated peace process, rather than a “military first” policy, to achieve the goal of denuclearization. Drawing lessons from the Helsinki Process of the 1980s, Alton [wrote](#), “What is needed now is a painstaking and patient bridge-building strategy, one which cajoles and coaxes, but does not appease.”

Altering the Playing Field—To Pyongyang via Helsinki

It’s time for the United States to launch a multilateral initiative designed to attack the DPRK’s nuclear ambitions enfilade rather than by frontal assault. The objective would be to shift the focus of diplomacy from the North’s plutonium to its people through a multilateral, multifaceted engagement strategy based on the Helsinki process launched by the United States and its allies during the Cold War.

A Helsinki-style engagement strategy would have to be comprehensive, building multiple bridges of engagement. It could be designed to augment, rather than replace the Six Party Talks, assuming they can be resuscitated. Eventually, the parties must grapple with the North’s pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, but the Helsinki-style approach would begin with a more modest agenda focused on confidence and security building measures to reduce tensions and the risk of conflict emerging from miscommunication or miscalculation. Other dialogue topics would include energy security, economic modernization, agriculture reform, international trade and finance, social welfare, health policy, education, legal and judicial systems, women’s rights, refugees, freedom of religion and belief and the rights of the disabled.

Engagement of this sort would have to be given time to succeed. It does not offer a quick fix to end the North’s nuclear ambitions or eliminate its human rights violations, but neither do the alternatives of coercive diplomacy or military strikes. The goal would be to so fundamentally alter the situation that a treaty ending the Korean War and denuclearizing the Korean peninsula would be within reach rather than a bridge too far.

This approach has a number of advantages. First, it has the potential to unify South Korean progressives, who first embraced the notion under the presidency of Kim Dae-jung, and conservatives, who see potential for it based on the model of German unification. Second, Helsinki-style engagement has proven its value already, helping to promote economic reform and greater respect for human rights inside the nations of the Soviet bloc. Third, it offers a step-by-step approach suited to a political environment devoid of trust. Initial small-scale confidence building measures—reciprocal actions that signal peaceful intentions—could create an environment more conducive to taking larger risks for peace. Finally, an inclusive, regional approach allays concerns that any one country would dominate the structure. It would also allow middle powers to play a constructive role—note the [helpful advice on freedom of expression](#) Mongolian President Elbegdorj offered Kim Jong-Un in a speech to students at Kim Il Sung University during his recent visit to Pyongyang. [Obama Administration: please also note the deft way Elbegdorj combined soccer diplomacy with his official state visit.]

So why hasn’t the Helsinki concept gained more traction in the corridors of the Old Executive Office Building or the State Department? Perhaps because the necessary preconditions for a Helsinki process have not been met. The 1975 Helsinki Final Act did not *begin* the process of détente; it followed it. The wind-down of proxy wars in Southeast Asia, the agreement that “Mutually Assured Destruction” was *not* a preferred strategic nuclear doctrine, and the success of the first fledgling steps at superpower arms control all *preceded* the Helsinki Accords.

Jump-starting détente in Northeast Asia will require a bold diplomatic opening—think Kissinger to China bold. President Obama would have to channel the “yes we can” spirit of 2008 rather than the “oh,

no we shouldn't" spirit of 2013. And the President will need to coordinate his approach with North Korea's neighbors and other potential partners, almost all of whom seem likely to embrace any move that breathes fresh life into the diplomatic process.

Is this politically feasible? Diplomatic overtures to Pyongyang are rarely popular, but if recent polling data on US efforts to engage Iran are any guide, there may be more support for engagement than the President's advisers realize. Americans by a [two-to-one margin](#) support striking a deal with Iran, even if that deal requires sanctions relief and results only in restrictions on, and not elimination of, Iran's nuclear program. The United States should follow President Park's lead and move forward with a process of rapprochement. It should not set preconditions, such as requiring concrete steps by the DPRK to demonstrate its sincerity about denuclearization. The DPRK is NOT sincere about denuclearization...yet. And it won't be until more fundamental changes in Northeast Asia are affected through a Helsinki-style multilateral process of engagement.

It's hard to say exactly how the DPRK would respond to such an opening. Even with the purge of Jang, who was widely rumored to be a supporter of economic engagement with China, there exists a constituency for reform and opening up inside the DPRK. Officials managing energy policy, agriculture, light industry, science, and education have much to gain from reducing North Korea's political and economic isolation and cultivating foreign investment, trade, and exchanges. But their clout has been undercut by years of failed nuclear diplomacy and heightened military tension. Kim Jong Un and his cohorts cannot navigate the path toward peace and denuclearization in the dark. The world must illuminate that path for them.

So as already mentioned, the United States and other members of the international community would be well advised initially to press for small, but real, confidence and security building measures. Carefully calibrated economic initiatives could follow, designed to bolster civilian, market-oriented agricultural and light industrial ventures. With time and effort, it is possible that the leaders of the DPRK could be persuaded—by both internal and external stimuli—to stop their provocations and begin to unleash the creative potential of the North Korean people. As this process [gains](#) momentum—bolstered by cultural and educational exchanges and humanitarian assistance—North Korea's leaders would gain the confidence they need to shelve and then abandon their nuclear weapons; decoupling their own futures from the North's limited nuclear arsenal. If engagement with the DPRK followed a trajectory similar to that of engagement with China, the people of North Korea would be among the earliest beneficiaries, seeing an improvement in all aspects of their lives, from nutrition and health to respect for their fundamental human rights.

Time to be Bold

The Administration's approach toward the DPRK has come to be known as strategic patience. "[Wise and masterly inactivity](#)" can sometimes be an effective tactic for defusing tension. But in this case, inactivity not only invites DPRK provocations, but also does nothing to encourage reforms or alleviate the suffering of the North Korean people.

While there are no signs that the Obama administration is poised to launch any new initiatives in Northeast Asia, if talks with Iran are successful, that might change. The smart choice is to be bold. Engage Pyongyang without delay, not as a reward for bad behavior, but because it offers the best chance to gradually influence North Korea's conduct, encouraging it to respect international norms, protect the human rights of its people, and abandon its nuclear weapons.

The 1975 Helsinki Accords set the stage for the end of the Cold War in Europe and led to the

creation of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The Helsinki process worked in part because it built people-to-people contacts that translated later into political pressure for reform and opening up. It worked because it offered things of value to both sides in the Cold War, including enhanced security, tension-reduction, and economic opportunities. It is not hard to imagine the potential of a similar mechanism to improve the lives of all people living on or neighboring the Korean peninsula.

The views expressed are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the positions of Amnesty International, USA.