

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

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

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Welcome to our witnesses and to everyone joining us this afternoon.

One of the key questions we have to ask in considering what a Helsinki-type process could do for East Asia is – how could it be made to help the people of North Korea? The scale and scope of human rights abuses in North Korea defies our imagination – simply to live in North Korea is to have one’s human dignity trampled on. The imperative of US policy in this part of the world is – what can it do to promote the liberation of humanity from the living hell of North Korea? What can it do to mitigate the evil that the North Korean government inflicts on its people?

I’ll be particularly interested in learning more today about the terrible plight of North Korean refugees in China, who China repatriates to North Korea at alarming rates, despite China’s participation in the 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol. This repatriation disproportionately affects women, who then come to face torture, sexual abuse, or death. Especially in China, many women are drawn into human trafficking rings that extend to Thailand, Burma, and other nations in the region, which only deepens the economic impact and security threats in the region. This is a human tragedy I’ve worked to highlight in my position as Co-Chairman of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China.

I also want to mention U.S. citizens detained without reason, and essentially held as hostages by the North Korean regime. Kenneth Bae, a Protestant minister, has been detained in a North Korean labor camp since November 3, 2012. Because of the rapid deterioration of his health, including losing over 50 pounds, losing his vision, high blood pressure and diabetes, Bae was moved to a “Special Prison,” where he is forced to do farm labor for eight hours a day. What could a Helsinki-type process do to help us get him home?

While the Helsinki process was structured around the geo-political realities of Europe and Eurasia, and has shown its limitations in recent decades, it has also promoted human dignity, human rights, and democracy – and it continues to do so. The question of whether it could be adapted to do so something similar for Northeast Asia certainly deserves an answer.

Thank you again, to our panelists for being here today and I am very much looking forward to hear the insights and perspectives you will be providing us with today in understanding the implications of this initiative.