



Remarks of the Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs
Hearing: "North Korea's Sea of Fire: Bullying, Brinkmanship and Blackmail"
March 10, 2011

As we address the threats posed by the North Korean regime to our nation's security interests, to our allies, and to its own people, I would like to take a moment to remember another brave people, the Tibetans, as they commemorate the 52nd anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising.

At the recent White House State Dinner for the visiting Chinese leader, a Chinese pianist played a song from the long-forgotten Korean War whose lyrics portray the brave American soldiers who fought for freedom in the Korean peninsula as "wolves and jackals."

Those depicted at our Korean War Memorial are no jackals. These are America's own boys; these are our beloved sons.

"Our Nation," as the memorial inscription reads, "honors our sons and daughters who answered the call to defend a country they never knew and a people they never met." Having risen from the ashes of war, the Republic of Korea, a thriving democracy and an economic powerhouse, is the proud legacy for those who fought and died over sixty years ago.

By contrast, in North Korea, a modern Caligula pursues his nuclear bread and circuses while he lets his own people starve. He plays a risky game of brinkmanship, sinking a South Korean naval vessel, defined as an act of war, and shelling South Korean island villagers with a sense of impunity.

And why does he dare to do so? He is confident that his Chinese patrons will protect him, both on the ground in Asia and in the halls of the United Nations.

And the leader in Pyongyang threatens to turn Seoul, "the miracle on the Han River", into "a sea of fire." He also directed his hackers to try to disrupt joint U.S./South Korean military exercises held recently by jamming Global Positioning System (GPS) devices critical to South Korean military communications.

But the evil deeds of this modern day Caligula do not end in Korea. He has attempted to ship arms to the brutal regime in Burma and the Tamil Tigers. News reports indicate that, with Chinese complicity and in defiance of UN sanctions, he shipped missile parts to Tehran via Beijing's airport. North Korea has attempted to ship arms to Hamas and Hezbollah—both proxies of the Iranian regime and both designated by the U.S. Department of State as foreign terrorist organizations. And it was North Korea that helped the Syrian regime build the nuclear

facility that Israel removed in September 2007. The International Atomic Energy Agency is still investigating and seeking answers on this North Korea/Syria nuclear facility.

All this in the midst of one failed round after another of the Six-Party talks. These talks have proven to be little more than kabuki theater demonstrating only Pyongyang's duplicity and broken promises.

Former Los Alamos National Laboratory director Siegfried Hecker reported that "his jaw just dropped" when he saw a facility in North Korea last November with "hundreds of centrifuges." He added that the world should take Pyongyang's apparent uranium enrichment program seriously. This revelation indicates that Pyongyang has had a covert second track to nuclear weaponry in defiance of the Agreed Framework and the Six-Party talks.

Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell is en route to Seoul, as we meet, to discuss this critical Highly Enriched Uranium issue with our South Korean allies. North Korea promised to accept a transparent verification of its denuclearization when it was removed from the list of state sponsors of terrorism by the Bush Administration in October 2008. Pyongyang reneged on that promise and withdrew from the Six-Party talks after getting what it wanted.

In January of this year, a court in Seoul, South Korea sentenced a spy to ten years in prison for planning to assassinate a leading North Korean defector on direct orders from the regime in Pyongyang. The U.S. criminal code defines such action as international terrorism. Is it not high time for the State Department to re-list North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism?

Meanwhile, Pyongyang has requested further U.S. food aid as reports indicate renewed food shortages in North Korea. There are some grave concerns about this proposal. There is the question of the American food aid remaining in North Korean warehouses when Pyongyang expelled American humanitarian NGOs in the spring of 2009. Pyongyang distributed this food, without monitoring.

There must be a full accounting of these twenty thousand tons of food aid requested. Lest we forget, in December 2008, U. S. shipments of food aid to North Korea via the World Food Program (WFP) were suspended due to growing concerns about diversion to the North Korean military and regime elite and WFP's lack of effective monitoring and safeguards. Fast approaching is the 100th anniversary next year of the birth of Kim Jong-il's father, and there is the danger that aid provided would be diverted for this spectacle.

Much has occurred since the last Full Committee hearing on North Korea was held in early 2007. I look forward to receiving the witnesses' insight on North Korean actions in the last four years and their recommendations for U.S. policy moving forward.

I now turn to the distinguished Ranking Member, my good friend Mr. Berman, for his opening remarks.