

**LIFTING THE VEIL: GETTING THE REFUGEES OUT,
GETTING OUR MESSAGE IN:
AN UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
NORTH KOREAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

JOINT HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HUMAN
RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

AND THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
OF THE

COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
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**LIFTING THE VEIL: GETTING THE REFUGEES
OUT, GETTING OUR MESSAGE IN: AN UP-
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NORTH KOREAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2005

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS
AND INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS, AND
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittees met, pursuant to notice, at 1:40 p.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Christopher H. Smith and Hon. James A. Leach (Chairmen of the Subcommittees) presiding.

Mr. SMITH. I will open up this hearing of the two Subcommittees. By way of introduction, my name is Chris Smith. I chair the Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations Subcommittee, and Congressman Leach will be here momentarily. This is a joint hearing of our two Subcommittees. I would like to thank Jim Leach for co-chairing the second hearing on the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004.

We co-chaired the first hearing on the act on April 28 of this year to examine its implementation, and I expressed my concern that the Administration was not implementing the legislation with the same resolve with which Congress passed it, and I continue to have those concerns.

Last July, I had the privilege to meet two of the witnesses who will be testifying at this hearing. They are women from North Korea who have experienced firsthand the horrors not only of the human rights abuses in their own country, but of the unspeakable degradation, enslavement, and exploitation of the human trafficking systematically taking place in China. Their stories are made even more poignant by the suffering they endured at seeing their daughters subject to the same fate. Their accounts reenforced my resolve to ensure the implementation of the act, and I am certain that their witness here today will likewise benefit all of us who have the opportunity to hear them.

Unfortunately, the experiences of our witnesses are not unique for the women of North Korea. According to Ambassador John Miller, the Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons at the U.S. Department of State, between 80 and 90

percent of the refugees from North Korea, especially women and young children, become victims of trafficking in China.

We know that women and girls are forced into prostitution, or sold into so-called “marriages” that are frequently abusive. So, some escape only to be captured and re-sold multiple times.

In violation of China’s obligation as a signatory to the UN Refugee Convention, the Government of China hunts down North Koreans and forcibly returns them into the hands of the brutal North Korean regime. Of those returnees, most are imprisoned, many are tortured, and some are executed. Pregnant prisoners are routinely beaten or coerced into aborting their unborn children, as the regime also considers them to be political prisoners.

The plight of the North Korean refugees is not unknown to the international community. I understand that a resolution is under consideration by the Third Committee at the United Nations that addresses the human rights abuses in North Korea, including the suffering of North Korean refugees.

Non-governmental organizations are attempting to assist the North Koreans in China, although there are reports that Chinese authorities are arresting the leaders of these organizations, and expelling them too.

A third witness at this hearing, who heads a non-governmental organization in South Korea, will be available to give us an NGO’s perspective on the North Korea refugee crisis.

China’s refusal to grant the UNHCR access to the border provinces, despite being a party to the Refugee Convention and its Protocol, and its general refusal to allow UNHCR to process most North Korean refugees in China, is absolutely unacceptable, and so is the Chinese Government’s blind eye to human trafficking. But what is perhaps most troubling is our own apparent inability to implement the North Korean Human Rights Act.

It is simply shameful that the United States still has not resettled a single North Korean refugee since the act’s passage. We understand the difficulties the UNHCR, the U.S. Department of State, and the Department of Homeland Security have in processing these refugees in China and other neighboring Asian countries. But the law gives the United States Government clear marching orders to assist these refugees, and it is incumbent upon the U.S. Government to find ways to do so.

To emphasize the urgency and the importance of this issue, I have included an amendment in this year’s State Department Authorization Bill that calls for a detailed description of the measures undertaken by the Secretary of State with respect to facilitating refugee application submissions under the act.

This description would include country-specific information with respect to the United States’ efforts to secure the cooperation and permission of the governments of countries in East and Southeast Asia to facilitate the United States’ processing of North Koreans seeking protection as refugees. We need to work closely with the UN and our South Korean allies to solve this problem, and quickly. I hope and would hope that the testimony we hear today will motivate us all to take action.

The remainder of the hearing will focus on a purpose of the act that these Subcommittees have not yet addressed—to promote the

free flow of information into and out of North Korea. According to this Committee's report on the act, North Korea's official media—the only media allowed in North Korea—extensively glorifies the wisdom and rule of Kim Jong Il, feeds paranoia about the threat of attack by the United States, and misrepresents the conditions and standards of living that exist in the outside world, particularly in South Korea. In general, North Koreans are subject to pervasive, lifelong indoctrination, and lack an independent frame of reference from which to judge either the claims of the regime or the genuine disposition of the outside world, in particular the United States, toward the North Korean people.

The North Korean penal code considers listening to foreign broadcasts a “crime against the revolution” subject to capital punishment. Yet despite the threat of death, surveys of North Korea refugees and defectors indicate that between a quarter and a half of North Koreans modify their fixed-channel radios to receive foreign broadcasts. There is also evidence that a sizeable number of North Koreans listen to broadcasts while residing temporarily in other countries, including China, after fleeing North Korea. Therefore, it is clear that the act's provisions for providing objective information through broadcasting to North Koreans are of significance importance.

It is regrettable that no one from the Department of State was available today to testify about the Executive Branch's implementation of the relevant sections of the act, though I was pleased to learn that it has offered to give a classified briefing to Committee Members and staff in the very near future.

I am grateful to our witnesses who have traveled all the way from South Korea just to be with us here today, and to those who have made their attendance possible. I look forward to the testimony of all of our witnesses with the expectation that it will give the needed impetus to a full implementation of the act, for the benefit of the suffering and the oppressed North Korean people.

I would like to yield to Mr. Payne to offer any opening comments he might have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

First of all, I would like to thank my good friend from Iowa, Jim Leach, for co-chairing this second joint hearing on the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004. We co-chaired the first hearing on the Act on April 28th of this year to examine its implementation, and I expressed my concern then that the Administration was not implementing the legislation with the same resolve with which Congress passed it. I continue to have those concerns.

Last July, I had the privilege to meet two of the witnesses who will be testifying at this hearing. They are women from North Korea who have experienced first-hand the horrors not only of the human rights abuses in their own country, but of the unspeakable degradation, enslavement and exploitation of the human trafficking systemically taking place in China. Their stories are made even more poignant by the suffering they endured at seeing their daughters subjected to the same fate. Their accounts reinforced my resolve to ensure the implementation of the Act, and I am certain that their witness here today will likewise benefit all of us who have the opportunity to hear them.

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80 and 90 percent of the refugees from North Korea, especially women and young children, become victims of trafficking in China. We know that women and girls are forced into prostitution, or sold into so-called “marriages” that are frequently abusive. Some escape only to be captured and re-sold multiple times. In violation of China’s obligations as a signatory to the UN Refugee Convention, the Government of China hunts down North Koreans and forcibly returns them into the hands of the brutal North Korean regime. Of those returnees, most are imprisoned, many are tortured, and some are executed. Pregnant prisoners are routinely beaten or coerced into aborting their unborn children, as the regime also considers them to be political criminals.

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To emphasize the urgency and importance of this issue, I have included an amendment in this year’s State Department Authorization Bill that calls for a detailed description of the measures undertaken by the Secretary of State with respect to facilitating refugee application submissions under the Act. This description would include country-specific information with respect to United States efforts to secure the cooperation and permission of the governments of countries in East and Southeast Asia to facilitate United States processing of North Koreans seeking protection as refugees. We need to work closely with the UN and our South Korean allies to solve this problem, and quickly. I would hope that the testimony we will hear today will motivate us to take action.

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petus to the full implementation of the Act, for the benefit of the suffering and oppressed North Korean people.

I now yield to my good friend and colleague from New Jersey, Ranking Member of the Africa and Global Human Rights Subcommittee, Mr. Payne. We will then hear from Mr. Leach, Chairman of the Asia and The Pacific Subcommittee.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Leach, for calling this very important hearing on the situation in North Korea, and once again follow up on the implementation of the North Korean Human Rights Act. I thank the Ranking Member also, Mr. Faleomavaega, for having a very strong interest on this issue.

I would have hoped that there would have been a representative from the Department of State to officially answer questions as relates to the position of the State Department, or at least some persons who have responsibility for administering programs in that area. I do know that we do have Voice of America and Radio Free Asia, which are funded through the government, but perhaps in the future it might be good to have a witness from the Department of State to answer some of the questions that we have.

As you know, the dire situation in North Korea motivates many North Koreans to seek a better life across the border in China, much like the testimony of the two refugee women who will address us today. The State Department reports that 80 to 90 percent of North Koreans who cross the Tumen River into China end up as victims of trafficking. As we will hear, women and young girls are the most impacted as they are vulnerable to sexual and domestic bondage and abuse once they arrive in China, and may comprise 75 percent of the refugees.

The terrible conditions of North Korea, including food shortage, lack of health service, unfair, unsafe water and poor sanitation, lack of human rights, really continue to create a serious problem in North Korea.

Just recently the World Food Program had to cut rations which happened to coincide, unfortunately, with a cut in the rations the government provides to 70 percent of the 23.5 million people who live in urban areas and rely on food distribution from governmental agencies or international agencies.

The brutal eliciting trafficking of humans is a thriving business, especially among the Tumen River edge, and as China does not recognize North Korean defectors as refugees, they do not receive protection that they would otherwise in other parts of the world.

The UNHCR, the High Commission for Refugees, is not allowed access to these people in many cases in order to produce accurate numbers of North Koreans in China or deliver assistance to them. The fact is, they are targeted in China, and I once again condemn the People's Republic of China for forcing defectors to repatriate back to North Korea, and call on them to allow UNHCR to have access to the refugees who desperately need help and assistance, and should allow the international organizations to deal with the situation.

As we have indicated, the numbers vary and it is very difficult to know exactly how many refugees that we have across the border. We have heard estimates from as low as 10,000—the official Chinese estimate—to more than 300,000 by extrapolating numbers from village surveys. And in March 2005, the State Department es-

timated the number to be between 30,000 and 50,000 down from the 75,000 to 125,000 range in 2000.

So we are unfortunate they were able to get accurate numbers. It does not help the situation, but once again, let me express my concern of the continued crisis in North Korean refugees in China. I thank the Chair and persons for calling this important meeting, and look forward to the testimony of the witnesses. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. It is a distinct honor to recognize Chairman Jim Leach of the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific who is the prime sponsor of the North Korean Human Rights Act, and to offer any time he might choose.

Mr. LEACH. Well, thank you, Chris, and I would like to thank you for taking the initiative in calling today's joint hearing.

The plight of North Koreans both inside and outside their country of origin was the primary motivation for the North Korean Human Rights Act, which was put into law a year ago this month. I am pleased that today's meeting will provide this Committee with its first opportunity to hear directly from some of the most vulnerable members of that population: North Korean women who are trafficked and abused in third countries, primarily in the People's Republic of China.

Increased international attention to this circumstance will be a necessary step to breaking the cycle of exploitation. I regret to note that implementation of the act by the Administration during the past 12 months has been exceedingly slow, particularly with regard to refugee assistance and resettlement. Indeed, I am not aware of any subsequent progress since our last oversight hearing exactly 6 months ago.

The response to our questions at that hearing indicated that the United States had not yet undertaken the high level diplomatic efforts with third countries necessary to allow us to proceed with the quiet process of saving even some limited number of intending refugees.

This was underscored last week when the Department of State reported to Congress, and I quote, "that there were no applications for refugee admission to the United States filed by North Koreans during the past year."

Well, this is a true statement, it is just not describing the underlying facts. We are aware of cases where North Korean refugees hiding in third countries have approached United States diplomatic posts, unsuccessfully seeking assistance for relocating to the U.S. as refugees.

Furthermore, the report demonstrates an adequate disregard for the requirements of current law. Section 303 of the act imposes an affirmative obligation on the Department of State to, and I quote, "facilitate the submission of refugee applications" by North Koreans. Thus, an annual total of zero applications and zero admissions is clearly unacceptable.

This fact has not gone unnoticed in the overseas press or by South Korean officials who have asked me on multiple occasions whether the United States is serious in its intent to share the burdens of assisting North Korean refugees. The matter should be settled. The law permits us to share in those burdens.

The United States is the largest refugee resettlement program in the world by a significant factor. We are also home to the largest and most successful ethnic Korean population outside of Northeast Asia. The fact that we still have not admitted any North Korean refugees flaunts our values and our law.

With the belated appointment of the Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea, we are hopeful that these issues may begin to receive the attention and action intended by the Congress when we enacted Public Law 108.333 over a year ago.

In closing, it must be understood that the Congress did not intend the North Korean Human Rights Act as a rhetorical exercise. The law was enacted to promote respect for human rights, transparency in the delivery of humanitarian aid, and protection for North Korean refugees. It granted considerable discretion to Executive Branch agencies in pursuing those ends.

In a government of laws, the Executive clearly has obligations it is yet to meet. This is disconcerting to say the least.

Again, I would like to thank Chairman Smith for his long-standing leadership on human rights and refugee issues, and I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to now recognize Mr. Rohrabacher, Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee. As a matter of fact, everybody on this dias on my right is an International Relations Subcommittee Chairman.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I believe the fact that the Ranking Members of the International Relations Committee are here today reflects the priority that we have on focusing on human rights on North Korea, not just human rights and not just North Korea, but human rights in North Korea.

Unfortunately, American policy toward North Korea seems to have been aimed at stability on the Korean Peninsula rather than on human rights. American policy priorities in dealing with horrific dictatorship like that found in North Korea should not be based on achieving stability, but instead should be aimed at bringing change in that part of the world because we are allies not with the government, the American people are allied with the people of these countries.

As today's hearing will verify, the people living in North Korea are victimized probably more than in any other location in the world by their own government. Human rights violations, to say that they are human rights violations in North Korea is a gross understatement just by saying that there are human rights violations.

It is part of the system. It is inherent in the structure of that government, and we see it in the sufferings of the people. Today's hearing focuses on the outcome of human trafficking and the suffering of women because of the nature of that government.

The last thing we should want to do is take that suffering for granted and suggest that we want stability in that part of the world, which means for the government to stay the same.

Human rights does not seem to have been a consideration for years on the part of the United States in terms of North Korea, and let us note that the Government of North Korea is an outlaw government, not to its own people, but to the rest of the world. And

as is so often the fact, governments that violate the rights of their own people, and on a grand scale, inevitably become threats to the greater world peace.

Just take a look at what happened in Afghanistan and the Taliban regime. We ignored and acquiesced and the Taliban regime, again a government that grossly abused the female population of that country, and in the end America and the Western World paid the price for wanting stability in Afghanistan rather than focusing on the human rights of the people who live in Afghanistan.

So today, while we look at North Korea, I would suggest that the United States should look deep into its soul and when we try to find answers to this challenge to world peace that is brought upon us by a North Korean regime that is building nuclear weapons that threaten its neighbors, and yes, threaten all of us, that the answer may be for us to recommit ourselves to the cause of human rights, and recommit ourselves and dedicate ourselves to help protect the rights of the North Korean people, because in the end, that is what will save us as we move to save them.

I would like to thank and congratulate, of course, Chairman Smith, Chairman Leach, as well as Ranking Members Payne and Faleomavaega, for conducting this hearing today.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Chairman Rohrabacher. I would now like to recognize Chairman Burton, who is Chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee.

Mr. BURTON. First of all, Chris, Chairman Smith, thank you very much for having this hearing. I think everybody in the audience can tell by all the Chairmen that are here of the various Subcommittees how important we think this hearing is.

You know, today the North Korean Ambassador is on Capitol Hill. He was at a meeting just a little while ago and I stopped in, and I hope that if there is anybody here from the North Korean Embassy, they will carry the messages that are being delivered by my colleagues and the witnesses today back to North Korea and let them know that there is unity in this body in opposition to the horrible things that are going on in North Korea.

People cannot worship there. They cannot show any political opposition. They cannot really do much of anything without getting into trouble, and they are in a Catch-22 situation. If they stay in the country, they suffer deprivation, they suffer heartache, they suffer torture, prejudice, every other thing you can think of. And if they leave the country and go to China, their situation is not a heck of a lot better, especially in view of the atrocities that we know have been taking place over there.

So I guess the only thing I would like to say today is that we stand with the people of North Korea who are suffering. We want to see human rights allowed and approved, and I hope my colleagues who have not had a chance to get to Korea, South Korea, get a chance to go up to the 38th parallel and take a firsthand look at the situation there, what we face between free Koreans and Communist Koreans. I think it will give them a real different view on the world if they get a chance to see that firsthand.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for having this hearing. You are a real human rights champion not only in this

area, but around the world, and you have my admiration. I really appreciate the witnesses coming today to testify.

Mr. SMITH. Chairman Burton, thank you very much. You have been a great leader. You know, I look to my right, and again, this is like Battleship Row, people who care about human rights. And the next speaker is Ed Royce, the Chairman of the International Terrorism and Nonproliferation Subcommittee.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Chairman Smith. I thank you and Chairman Leach for holding these hearings. I also want to thank Mr. Eun, who is with us today. I know from my trips to Korea and conversations with Mr. Eun, conversations with defectors, conversations with refugees, the listenership, those who tune in is increasing and has been increasing rather dramatically over the last 4 or 5 years.

I was pleased to work with Chairman Leach to help craft the broadcasting provisions on the North Korean Human Rights Act, which has now been law for a year. I think the Committee can be proud of this legislation. In the past, I carried the legislation to expand the broadcast hours into North Korea as well as legislation to fund the erection of broadcast towers and transmitters.

But when we look at the bill we passed last year, section 104 of the law authorizes the President to take such actions as may be necessary to increase the availability of information inside North Korea by increasing the availability of radios, and this is an area that I am particularly interested in.

We, at the time, supplied \$2 million to carry out this provision, but it is the ability for battery-operated and solar-powered radios to be brought onto the Chinese/North Korean border, and the ability of those to circulate across North Korea, that I am most interested in making certain is carried out.

Furthermore, it requires a classified report to Congress on the actions the government has taken in this regard a year after enactment, and as we have just hit the 1-year anniversary, I think all of us are eager to examine that report.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Chairman Royce, thank you so much as well.

Let me introduce our first panel, beginning with Kelu Chao. Kelu was born and raised in Taiwan. As a child growing up in Asia in the 1960s, the best radio program she can recall came from the United States, the Voice of America.

Ms. Chao has worked in almost every capacity as an international broadcaster at VOA since 1980. As a field reporter, she has covered a wide variety of news events, including the build-up to the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989 in Beijing.

She garnered more than 30 awards as a programmer, including two from the New York Radio Festival and one from the Asian Broadcasting Union. In 2003, Ms. Chao was named VOA's first Associate Director for Language Programming, and welcome.

Next, we will hear from Dan Southerland who joined Radio Free Asia as Vice President and Executive Editor in 1996, with primary responsibility for all editorial operation. His brief has since expanded to include oversight of all nine broadcast services, as well as Radio Free Asia's award-winning Web site.

Prior to joining RFA, Mr. Southerland spent 18 years as a foreign correspondent in Asia, and is recognized as one of America's most respected reporters on Asian affairs.

In 1995, Mr. Southerland was awarded the Edward Weintal Prize for distinguished diplomatic reporting for a series on the Mao years in China. Other honors included a Pulitzer Prize nomination in 1990 for his coverage of Tiananmen and the Edward R. Murrow Press Fellowship in 1990 to 1991.

Ms. Chao, if you can begin.

**STATEMENT OF MS. KELU CHAO, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR
LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING, VOICE OF AMERICA**

Ms. CHAO. Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittees, we greatly appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to talk about the combined efforts of the Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Asia (RFA) to get news and information into North Korea as well as to the tens of thousands of North Korean refugees in China.

I am pleased to be joined today by fellow national broadcaster Dan Southerland who has been with RFA since its inception. Also behind me are our colleagues from—directors from the Korean Services of both RFA and VOA. Together we hope to give you a full picture of the efforts of the Broadcasting Board of Governors to deliver information that empowers the people of North Korea.

North Korea presents one of the most challenging broadcast environments for BBG broadcasting. Because none of the other major Western international broadcasters provide programming in the Korean language, VOA and RFA broadcasts fulfill a unique role in providing uncensored sources of information and directly reach this Stalinist country. Without us, North Koreans would be cut off from basic domestic and international news as well as some important information on how Americans live, how our society works, how our Government functions, and what our policies are.

VOA and RFA broadcast, as I told you, up to 7 hours a day, RFA, 4, and VOA, 3. VOA's programming is an all-inclusive range of news and information about North Korea, the United States, and the world. RFA's mission is to substitute for local media in countries where a free press is not tolerated. Together, this one-two punch has a powerful impact.

The extremely closed environment in which North Koreans live has made this population desperate for news about their country and the world. Radios must be registered, and dials are fixed. Anyone who tampers with a radio or dares to listen to us can expect to be imprisoned. North Koreans also do their best to jam our shortwave and medium wave signals. Even so, our signals for the most part are getting through.

In fact, our survey tells us that about half of the people in North Korea either modify their radios or know others who have done so. Both RFA and VOA have large audiences in North Korea.

Now, let me talk a little bit about VOA's broadcast. VOA's program into North Korea emphasizes the most important subject in United States relations with North Korea, particularly concerns over Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program, the dire human rights

situation, and the plight of North Korean defectors and refugees, including the stories of some who will testify here this afternoon.

The VOA also reports and explains United States policy toward North Korea in its regular coverage, and broadcasts editorials on United States policy. VOA benefits greatly by being able to send reporters into both China and North Korea.

Our Young Kweon Kim spent 2 weeks just last month on the Chinese side of the Tumen River reporting refugee stories and how North Koreans and Chinese trade illicit goods. VOA's Beijing correspondent this week interviewed a number of North Koreans, from ordinary persons to military officials, while he was in North Korea. A year or so ago, VOA's reporter, William Chien, won a prestigious award for his video reporting on the trafficking of North Koreans inside China.

Now, a little bit about RFA. We know through audience research that RFA's audience want reliable information about their own country and issues that impact their lives. They want stories that put a personal face on what is happening to North Koreans, stories about the lives of defectors, the challenges facing them, economic reform in other Communist countries, defectors' personal stories, language differences between North and South Korea, and Korean music, both Northern and Southern.

With so many North Koreans fleeing to China, RFA regularly provides news on human trafficking. RFA also broadcasts weekly features on the lives of North Korean defectors in the South, families' letters to abductees in the North, refugees' stories and Korean cultural programming.

A May 2005 survey of defectors reported that 10 percent listen regularly to VOA and 3.5 to RFA before they left North Korea. Once they got into China, 23.5 percent listened to VOA and 11.5 percent to RFA.

As impressive as these figures are, long-time listeners are even more inspiring. German physician, Dr. Norbert Vollelsen, who spent 18 months in North Korea told VOA's Korean service, and I quote:

“According to my friend who is still based in Pyongyang, you are not only the Voice of America but also the voice of the victims of the North Korean dictatorship. Every morning when I was in Pyongyang I was listening to VOA news—and my North Korean counterparts were sitting beside me. You were their main source of information about the outside world.”

A Korean listener in China wrote RFA to say, and I quote:

“How are you dear RFA reporter, sir? You have given courage and strength to defectors . . . I am sending my tribute from the bottom of my heart . . . We defectors, all of us, are listening to your broadcasts every day . . . If we miss one single day, we feel emptiness. I have been in China for three years. I have been roaming many places in China . . . I have witnessed too many cases of how much these refugees suffer mentally and physically. . . . I am too angry that I wasted 40 years of my life in North Korea . . . It is a society in which basic freedom is ignored . . . It is a wasteland of human rights. . . .”

In closing, I would like to stress that VOA and RFA provide an important lifeline to the outside world for North Korea. With your continued support, the dedicated Korean broadcasters of both VOA and RFA will continue to reach out to North Korean citizens every day.

Thank you again for holding this hearing, and we will be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Chao and Mr. Southerland follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MS. KELU CHAO, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING, AND MR. DANIEL SOUTHERLAND, VICE PRESIDENT FOR PROGRAMMING, RADIO FREE ASIA

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittees, I greatly appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to talk about the combined efforts of the Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Asia (RFA) to get news and information into North Korea as well as to the tens of thousands of North Korean refugees in China.

I am pleased to be joined today by fellow international broadcaster Dan Southerland, a well-known and widely respected professional journalist who has been with RFA since its inception. Also behind me are several other colleagues including the directors of the Korean Services of both RFA and VOA. Together we hope to give you a full picture of the efforts of the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) to deliver information that empowers the people of North Korea. North Korea presents one of the most challenging broadcast environments for BBG broadcasting. Because none of the other major Western international broadcasters (BBC, Deutsche Welle, Radio France International, etc.) provides any programming in the Korean language, VOA and RFA broadcasts are the only uncensored sources of information that directly reach the Stalinist country—where distortions of news must be countered by accurate and comprehensive reporting. Without us, all North Koreans, even its elites, are cut off from basic domestic and international news as well as how Americans live, how our society works, how our government functions, and what our policies are.

As President Bush has indicated, North Korea is arming itself with nuclear weapons while starving its citizens. In this regard, by countering Pyongyang's propaganda, VOA and RFA's programming contributes to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and the struggle for human rights in North Korea.

Our mission is that of all U.S. international broadcasting—to promote and sustain freedom and democracy by broadcasting accurate and objective news and information. Together we broadcast a total of seven hours a day: RFA four and VOA three. VOA's programming is an all-inclusive range of news and information about North Korea, the United States and the world. RFA's mission is to substitute for local media in countries where a free press is not tolerated. In North Korea, RFA broadcasts almost exclusively news and information about North Korea. VOA and RFA endeavor to be the most trusted media voices in North Korea. Together this "one-two punch" makes a superb team.

Media Environment and Transmission

The extremely closed environment in which North Koreans live has made this population desperate for news about their country and the world. Officially, all personal radios must have a fixed dial and be registered with government security offices. If radios are found to be owned illegally or altered to allow their owners to hear VOA, RFA and other foreign broadcasts, imprisonment can be expected. The North Korean government reformed its criminal code on April 29, 2004 to specifically punish those who listen to foreign broadcasting. As a result, anyone caught listening to foreign broadcasts can be jailed from two to five years.

North Korea has attempted to jam VOA and RFA broadcasts from time to time, although the effectiveness of jamming varies. A recent monitoring report indicated that a majority of RFA broadcasts can be heard with a good signal through the jamming. Approximately half of VOA transmissions can be heard and half are moderately to heavily jammed. The regime has also made statements attacking VOA and RFA on a regular basis. North Korea's official news agency, the Korean Central News Agency, has denounced VOA and RFA for airing stories about "a lot of defectors from the North."

North Koreans use medium and short wave radio. Medium wave is more readily available and listening is higher during the middle of the night when it is safer to

listen. Safety from detection is the biggest challenge in this operating environment, but research shows that the audience is motivated and will risk not only listening to foreign broadcasts, but also purchasing more than one radio. In recent years, studies suggest that China is a growing source of radios and other electronics, with an active black market trade across the border. Many defectors report having owned illegal radios with tunable dials hidden from authorities and a larger number (33 percent of defectors surveyed in 2005) report that they adjusted their radios to receive foreign broadcasts while in North Korea. One man, a former factory worker and now a defector in the South, reported owning three smuggled radios. "I had them registered and their frequencies fixed after buying them, but I listened to the radio by cutting a piece of the internal wire and connecting or disconnecting it," he said. "I would have been in big trouble if I'd been caught listening to unauthorized channels."

Dire conditions within the country have left many North Koreans with high levels of distrust in their government and its domestic media. Asked about their top media sources of information within North Korea, 19 percent of defectors in a 2004 study said non-domestic radio was second only to domestic television. We now find considerable evidence of Korean escapees making calls to relatives on cell phones from China. Indeed, 35 percent of defectors surveyed in 2005 said they communicate with their relatives on cell phones.

Internet usage in North Korea is rare according to recent surveys. Nevertheless, both VOA and RFA have well-developed North Korea Web pages that stream all of its broadcasting. The sites are updated daily. Research now shows that these sites are accessed weekly by six to seven percent of North Korean defectors recently interviewed and now living in the South.

Currently, BBG broadcasts a total of seven program hours daily to North Korea: three from VOA and four from RFA. We have been at that level since 2003 when both VOA and RFA doubled their broadcasts to North Korea. A total of 8,942 transmitter hours are used annually for these broadcasts on 14 separate shortwave frequencies and one medium wave frequency. North Koreans can hear VOA on medium wave (AM) and shortwave. RFA is broadcast only on shortwave.

Programming

Surveys of defectors indicate that we are already having an impact on the Korean peninsula and with Korean refugees hiding inside China, providing programming on issues the North Korean government is not sharing with its citizens, such as the truth about the famine, the state of human rights, the six party talks, economic development, religion, health, and news about the region. With this information, the people of North Korea will be better equipped to navigate their lives and their country.

We attract our audience in North Korea by creating a unique and compelling blend of news and information programming and then delivering our signals through an array of shortwave and AM transmitters. In addition, we broadcast during the hours when it is easiest for listeners to tune in to us. Darkness is indeed our friend. Not only does the night provide better atmospheric conditions for our shortwave signals, it is also the time when North Koreans have the greatest degree of privacy and find it easiest to listen surreptitiously. We know from listeners that they listen to our broadcasts under blankets and do not even tell their spouses that they listen for fear of reprisals against them and their families.

VOA Broadcasts

VOA's programming on North Korea benefits greatly by VOA's ability to send reporters into both China and North Korea. In fact, VOA Korean reporter Young Kweon Kim spent two weeks in September of this year along the Tumen River area between North Korea and China. His fascinating reports focus on how North Koreans manage to slip back and forth across the border, how they survive once inside China and how North Koreans and Chinese trade goods along the border. This trip emulates the successful trip to Yanbian of VOA Korean Service Chief In-sop Han in 2000. Back to the present: VOA Beijing correspondent Luis Ramirez managed to join an excursion trip into Pyongyang this week. These trips build on the amazing reporting done by VOA reporter William Chien a year or two ago when he produced a video report on the trafficking of North Koreans inside China.

In addition to Chien's award-winning report that was shown on national television in South Korea, VOA's radio programming to North Korea emphasizes the most important subjects in U.S. relations with North Korea, particularly Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program, the dire human rights situation and the plight of North Korean defectors. Featuring defectors is a key focus of VOA's pro-

grams. VOA also reports on and explains U.S. policy toward North Korea in its regular coverage, as well as broadcasts editorials on U.S. policy.

Our challenge is not made easier by the bifurcated audience in the north and the south. Of course the highly unstable North Korea is our top priority. But we do not take the South for granted. In South Korea, anti-American feelings are on the rise, especially among the younger generation. A recent poll suggested more than half of the youth of South Korea would side with North Korea against the U.S. in the event of a war. For this reason VOA designs its internet and television content to be relevant to the entire Korean peninsula.

RFA Broadcasts

In service to its listeners, RFA is increasing its original content to its broadcasts and listening closely to the needs of its audience. We know through audience research that RFA's audience wants reliable information about their own country and issues that impact their lives. They want stories that put a personal face on what is happening to North Koreans, stories about the lives of defectors and the challenges facing them, economic reform in other communist countries, defectors' personal stories, language differences between North and South Korea, and Korean music, both northern and southern.

Research suggests that defectors do not always understand South Korean terminology, so our listeners want to better understand these differences. RFA has done a number of programs on language. RFA has also broadcast regular stories about defectors and the East German experience. Research also shows that North Koreans, even those who are critical of the government, have an extremely hard time understanding nuclear issues in general and the Western perspective in particular. RFA strives to provide its listeners the context necessary to increase understanding of the nuclear issue.

With so many North Koreans fleeing to China, RFA is regularly providing news and information on human trafficking, particularly targeting girls and women who are the most vulnerable to trafficking once in China. RFA also broadcasts weekly features on the lives of North Korean defectors in the South, families' letters to abductees in the North, refugees' stories, and Korean cultural programming.

Impact

Through our adherence to Western journalistic standards and through our objective and accurate reporting, VOA and RFA earn the credibility that allow us to connect with our target audience—and the results are heartwarming. Listen to what is being said about us:

- German physician Dr. Norbert Vollertsen, who spent 18 months in North Korea providing humanitarian aid has told VOA Korean that “the North Korean people desperately need VOA’s help and encouragement. According to my friend who is still based in Pyongyang, you are not only the Voice of America but also the voice of the victims of the North Korean dictatorship. Every morning when I was in Pyongyang I was listening to VOA news—and my North Korean counterparts were sitting beside me. You were their main source of information about the outside world!”
- “How are you dear RFA reporter, sir? You have given courage and strength to defectors . . . I am sending my tribute from the bottom of my heart . . . We defectors, all of us, are listening to your broadcasts every day . . . If we miss one single day, we feel emptiness. I have been in China for three years. I have been roaming many places in China . . . I have witnessed too many cases of how much these refugees suffer mentally and physically. Chinese treatment of us, this inhumanity, must be condemned by the international community. I am too angry that I wasted 40 years of my life in North Korea . . . It is a society in which basic freedom is ignored . . . It is a wasteland of human rights. People get nothing, not even basic needs.” A letter from a North Korean listener in China.

Even though Pyongyang tries to jam both of us, research from InterMedia Research and reports from defectors provide sufficient proof that both stations are getting through.

A series of three defector surveys since 2003 have shown consistently that both RFA and VOA have regular listeners in North Korea. Defectors say they and many others in North Korea knew how to alter the fixed dials of local short wave radios to listen. In addition, a number of visitors to North Korea, including a former U.S. diplomat and a senior editor of the VOA Korean Service, reported that some VOA Korean language signals were clearly audible, despite jamming.

The BBG has commissioned three 200-person defector surveys from 2003 to 2005. The results of these surveys vary with each group of defectors interviewed and cannot be projected onto the entire population of North Korea. The 2004 InterMedia survey reported 8.5% regular listenership for VOA and 7.5% for RFA. A May 2005 InterMedia survey of North Korean defectors reported that although 60% are aware of regulations against listening to foreign broadcasts and more than a third (39 percent) know someone punished for doing so, 10% listen to VOA and 3.5% listen to RFA at least once a week while they are in North Korea. These listener figures jump to 23.5% a week for VOA and 11.5% for RFA once the defectors are inside China where transition listening is very common. Although all radios in North Korea have dials fixed to the state radio's medium wave frequency, defectors surveyed by InterMedia report that 23% of the people in North Korea personally modify their radios to receive foreign broadcasts and an additional 21% know others who fix their radios.

Conclusion

From programming featuring interviews with North Korean defectors who describe life in North Korea, China and South Korea, to reports on U.S.-North Korea relations featuring commentary by U.S. Government officials, members of Congress, academics, members of think tanks and other informed individuals, VOA and RFA are providing an important lifeline to the outside world for North Koreans. Reports on North Korea's international activities—and on how the rest of the world views North Korea—further enlighten its own citizens of their country's broader international agenda.

With your continued support, the dedicated group of broadcasters of VOA and RFA's Korean Services will continue to reach out to North Korean citizens every day. Thank you again for holding this hearing, and we will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Ms. Chao. And Mr. Southerland, I understand that you are ready and willing to answer any questions, but you pretty much associate your remarks with Ms. Chao. Okay.

Let me begin the questioning, if I could; either of you or both might want to respond to this. Has VOA and RFA broadcasting changed as a result of the passage of the North Korean Human Rights Act? And as you might recall, as part of the sense of Congress in that legislation, we asked that upwards of 12 hours a day of programming be provided.

Where are we on that now, and has that been reached?

I would just note, parenthetically, that it was about 5 years ago when the State Department bill came up, and I offered an amendment to make Radio Free Asia 24 hours into China, believing that the more we are on the air, obviously, the more people will be able to tune in and, obviously, get vital information that can be life changing.

But the 12 hours a day, is that something that we are doing now, or is it something that we are working toward? And what would it take resource-wise to accomplish that?

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. It would take greater resources to do the 12 hours a day, but let me just say we greatly appreciate the encouragement we got from the Human Rights Act, because we have increased, steadily increased our coverage of defectors, refugees, escapees. We have gotten into greater depth. We have really stepped up our coverage as best we can within the budgetary limits.

We are in a tight budgetary situation, and I would like to make this statement in the context that our board does put a high priority on—very high priority on broadcasting in North Korea. It has shown up in our language reviews as a high priority. But we do

have to recognize the tight budgetary situation at the moment. So to do more, we really do—we are prepared to do more, we need more people, we need more resources.

So I cannot give you an authoritative voice of the board here, but I am just telling you it is a high priority.

Mr. SMITH. What would it take? I mean, you might recall the act stipulated \$2 million of additional authorization. What would it take in order to get up there?

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. Well, we could go through a great deal more if we had, for example, eight more broadcasters, and a little more money to send more people into North Korea as stringers, or part-time reporters inside China. We would like to do more operation in and out of Russia. It is not easy to get in and out of these places, but one recent trend has been North Koreans showing up all over Asia. We are starting to beef up our Bangkok operation where we have a stringer, because all of a sudden you see North Koreans getting all the way to Burma. They go to Laos, and come out through Vietnam.

This is unbelievable what people go through to escape from North Korea since China, as you said, is not a very hospitable environment. People are desperate to keep going and they go all the way to Bangkok. We just had a case of a woman whose hip was amputated after she was beaten up by a North Korean guard. She was repatriated, I guess is the kind word for it, back to North Korea; made it out again; and lost the use of her legs due to frost-bite and beatings, and finally ended up in Bangkok. And now, I think, she is safely in South Korea.

This is what people are going through, and we think there are dramatic stories that should be covered, and particularly by us since the North Korean media, as you know, North Korean Central News Agency for Broadcasting quotes a lot of nonsense about many refugees leaving North Korea. They do not even recognize that there are many people leaving the country.

So we can do more. We are doing more.

Mr. SMITH. Yes, Ms. Chao.

Ms. CHAO. Okay, I would just like to mention that in year 2003, we both doubled our broadcast without additional resources, and although this is prior to the introduction of the Human Rights Act of 2004, we have a long wish list too. If we had the money, as Dan just mentioned about, it is important to expand networks in some of the Asian capital cities where North Koreans are active, not to mention about, you know, Beijing, Tokyo, even Moscow and so on and so forth.

It is also important to expand stringers in the United States where we can report out on some of the successful stories, how South Koreans or their brothers and sisters of defectors are working right here in this society once they are given opportunities.

We would also like to beef up our South Korean, or Seoul bureau, where we currently only have one correspondent. We can have more correspondents reporting on more stories with more focus on the North Korean refugees.

So basically the resources are—I mean, we are looking at scarce resources, and it looks like 2006 is not any better than before, and plus also the transmission money—I was told because of the oil and

fuel, that the regular transmission money now would be probably doubled in some of the relay stations, so we have to take care of—take into consideration of all of them, but I appreciate your interest.

Mr. SMITH. And I appreciate your fine explanation. If you could tell us for the record, in addition to the eight broadcasters, maybe further delineate so that we can work on the appropriations side of this to try and make sure that that money is available. One of those Members who is one of the finest human rights champions in the Congress, Frank Wolf, is here with us, as you know, of the Commerce, Justice and State Appropriations Committee, and very keen on this North Korean human rights travesty and Radio Free Asia.

So if you could provide that to the Committees, it would be very, very helpful; especially as we go forward.

Let me just ask you one final question, and then go to Mr. Payne.

With regards to human trafficking and religious issues, religiously-oriented issues, what kind of broadcasting are you doing with regards to those issues? How in depth? Do you profile individuals who have been trafficked, or talk about some of the churches that have been assisting refugees, for example? Could you just elaborate a little on that?

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. I will start out. Our reporting, by the way, on the human trafficking issue to start with, our reporting confirms what you have said about a large percentage of the North Korean women that will become victims of sexual abuse and human trafficking, so that has obviously been covered by us in a general way.

But we also humanize these stories. One recent example was a North Korean woman who was sold to a Chinese farmer. That is quite often, in some ways you could call that a form of prostitution, but basically a form of slavery, I suppose. And she was torn away from her two children who, you know, witnessed all of this, and then repatriated—I am saying the mother—it gets complicated, but the defector was sold to the Chinese farmer, and the two children were then repatriated back to North Korea.

This is the kind of story we get over and over again. Families split apart. Women always seem to be the first to be in trouble. Missionaries help us out. They get some funds for these people. They call us. They listen to our broadcasts and repeat the numbers over and over again so they would know what number to call to get us, or how to write us a letter. And so from those tips we can follow up and do a story.

And we had one woman who was pregnant inside China giving birth on her own near a road, and everything turned out all right, we later heard, but then we lost contact with her.

But the human stories are incredible, and that is the thing we try to do, is make this real. We also tell about the success stories of North Koreans who manage to get to South Korea and manage to start running their restaurant, so that people have a complete picture. But human trafficking is one of our biggest subjects, as is broadcasting the stories of missionaries.

Recently we had a story about an underground church in North Korea which was suppressed with about 80 people arrested, based

on our missionary sources. So we are on the phone constantly to the missionaries who are courageously going in there, and through them we get a lot of the stories and we get to the refugees.

Ms. CHAO. I think we are very similar on this front. We have a regular programming feature on North Korean refugees and human trafficking is a major part of it. We have a program called North Korean Odyssey. We interview those people in Seoul, in Beijing, in Moscow, and through their eyes and ears talking about their ordeals and talking about either their personal experience or they observed.

I would like to bring your attention of an—I just mentioned about this—award winning programs that we did, I think, about 1 or 2 years ago, which we sent our reporters to China along the Tumen River and Dun Dong, and the Guang Zhou area in Pyongyang, and over there we interviewed more than 28 refugees, and more than half of them are women, and it is on TV through their testimony, talking about how they are sold from one place to another place, how they have to hide themselves, how that at night they have no place to live, and they are just very moving stories.

Every time we send our reporters to either Seoul or Korea, we are in touch with this community, and we have collected a lot of stories, and we are on air for a lot of stories regularly.

Mr. SMITH. Ms. Chao, if you would not mind, I know I, and I am sure other Members of the Subcommittees, would like to see that footage, and to get some of the stories that have been written.

Many of us believe that the People's Republic of China ought to be considered for a tier 3 as a trafficking and egregious violator of minimum standards regarding trafficking. While Beijing itself makes some effort in and around Beijing, the further out you go, and particularly around the borders of North Korea, they are doing next to nothing as far as we can tell, and you know, they should be taking some proactive actions. That, added to the fact that they have been the contravention of their convention against, their refugee convention I should say, obligations which they have violated with impunity.

But I would love to get, if we could, a copy of that because we are planning a hearing, an additional seventh hearing, on human trafficking, and it could provide us, I think, some additional insight.

Ms. CHAO. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. I just have a question. It is an area that I do not have as much familiarity with as some other areas, and I just have a question about the accessibility of North Korean people to radios. What is the density? Is it that every family may have a radio even in rural areas? Could one of you give me some statistics on that?

Ms. CHAO. I wish I could give you a realistic comprehensive picture of this. However, we have to understand that there is no scientific in-country survey conducted inside of North Korea. So what we are trying to do for the last several years is to contract survey conducted in Seoul, in Beijing, and Moscow, where there are more gathering of defectors, and through them to understand the media habit in North Korea.

Of course, we have to understand that they are—most of them are more of the elites, and so the situation may not reflect the overall population in North Korea.

From them, the radio ownership is pretty high, and people listen to medium wave, listen to shortwave broadcasts, and most of them happen during the night because it has to be secretive, private activities, and some of them are afraid even to share this with their own spouse. It is kind of a hooded blanket on top of their head, and trying to tune in to the Radio Free Asia and VOA's broadcasts.

And some of the defectors did say that although the North Korean Government fixed the dial to the state frequencies, that more than half of them either know how to change it or know someone who has done so, and so that the research number from the defector survey, they have been consistently very encouraging, and our message to get through, through different ways, and mostly their motivation.

Mr. PAYNE. Well, that is good to hear. I know that—yes?

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. I noticed a recent trend during the last couple of years of more radios getting into North Korea because of a couple of things. Corruption among the border guards who, for a very small payoff, will let smugglers bring electronics into the country.

What defectors are telling us is that there are more radios coming in, and in some cases among the elite, at least, who can afford a radio, they will have two radios; one for the police check every 3 months to see if they have got a radio that is still soldered to one channel, and people will have a backup radio that they use for what they really want to listen to. So that is happening partly because of corruption, partly because people can make money selling radios inside North Korea through Korean/Chinese brokers who make the deal.

We even hear that some cell phones are now getting in for very specific uses, such as keeping families in touch with each other during a specific hour. A broker will get a cell phone in.

So there is a breakdown along the border, the China border, which is benefitting us, which means there are more, we think there are going to be more listeners.

Mr. PAYNE. Do you think that if there were—you know, we are not trying to encourage criminality, but if there were more radios made available, for example, through some funding, that could make their way up to the border to try to penetrate and to attempt to get more radios into North Korea. Do you think something like that would make any sense?

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. It is a little bit outside my mandate to comment on that. It would have to be another government agency, I guess, that would have to get into that because we are not specialists in that, but I am just saying that we are seeing a natural flow through a combination of factors that is making it easier for us to reach people.

I agree with Kelu that it is hard to quantify that, yes.

Ms. CHAO. Common sense-wise realistically—I mean, I think in general I agree with you. The more possibility of having radios inside of Korea or around the border is the more possibility for them to tune into the foreign broadcasts. However, realistically, we have

to deal with this very difficult environment. That is why this hearing is very important. How do we find a way to get it? We are not involved in this, but you know, we are happy to see more radios in North Korea.

Mr. PAYNE. Now another question. Does the government attempt to jam the station? I know we have had this infamous, whatever you want to call it, this Radio Marti that goes—supposed to go to Cuba, and I don't know whether anybody has heard it yet. But they keep trying to get it in. It seems like there has been an effective way to jam it, and so forth. I think now we have got planes, planes will fly around and get it in.

But anyhow, is there any blocking that they attempt to do in jamming?

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. Yes. They do attempt to jam us. I asked our specialist on this to listen to some jamming because we can actually monitor it from Japan. We can listen to what they are doing and pick it up, and the last broadcast that I listened to, it was jamming. You could hear it. It was called noise jamming, but it is not effective. You could also—we were getting through, and I think VOA similarly has been jammed, but it is very sporadic. It is usually not on all frequencies, so we use a number of frequencies to get around the jamming, and it is not nearly as effective, let us say, as Chinese jamming against our Chinese broadcasts.

So we are definitely getting through. I do not think North Korea has enough electricity to jam us, and as you know, the place is blacked out at night, and if they—they have to spend a dollar for every dollar we spend on transmission to jam us. They have to spend an equal amount. It is like tit-for-tat.

So we are winning that battle, but maybe Kelu wants to add something.

Ms. CHAO. Right. We actually together broadcast more than 8,000 hours a year to North Korea, both 14 shortwave frequencies and one medium wave. So yes, the North Korean Government is trying very hard to jam us. But according to anecdotal defector surveys, and we have diplomats visit there, and firsthand witnesses that hear us, yes, our messages are getting through loud and clear. Not all 14 frequencies, but some of them, or sometimes most of them if we are lucky.

Mr. PAYNE. Just kind of a last question sort of out of the radio realm, but has there been any exchanges where the South Koreans have been allowed to go to North Korea?

I understand that there was a breakthrough or two and that younger people tend to want to, sort of curious about North Korea, maybe the whole dream of unification. The older people, of course, remember the—you know, how they got to where they are. However, younger people might tend to say, "Let us try to reunite, be one Korea."

How do you find that playing out in general?

Ms. CHAO. I think you are referring to earlier there was a Gallup Survey talking about if there were a war happening in the Korean Peninsula, and the survey was conducted among the young people born between 1980 to 1989, and they were asked how they feel, which side they will side. I think there are large numbers, more

than half of them, said they would side with North Korea for one reason or another.

Since the former President Kim Dae Jung of South Korea's Sunshine Policy, it does have more exchange between South Korea and the North Koreans, and a number of activities, press visit and so forth. So they do have more sort of like, you know, exchange between themselves among the—and there are several union activities too.

I do not know if Dan wants to address on that. The answer is yes, there are more and more relationships and activities among both sides of Korea.

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. That is probably what I would have said.

Mr. PAYNE. Great. All right, thank you very much.

Mr. SMITH. Chairman Royce.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I was going to ask either of you what feedback that VOA or RFA have heard from the South Korean Government on your broadcasts. And the reason I have an interest in this is that on your next panel, you have a witness that the government reportedly intimidated. He told me about the circumstance shortly after it happened. He had his own little radio broadcasting transmitter, and he was trying to broadcast news and information into North Korea.

So I was going to ask, has the South Korean Government ever acted adversely on your broadcasts, or on your organizations for that matter?

Ms. CHAO. Generally—I don't know if Dan may want to comment on this. Generally, we do not hear from any government about our broadcast. We do our survey annually, and if we hear anything, usually it is negative. So I would say I have not heard any negative comments from South Korea—

Mr. ROYCE. Leave that alone, huh?

Ms. CHAO [continuing]. About our broadcast.

Mr. ROYCE. Well, that sounds like a policy. But it is my understanding—go ahead, sir.

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. I can give you one specific.

Mr. ROYCE. Sure.

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. That is that RFA early on asked for South Korean cooperation. It would be ideal to be able to transmit from neighboring South Korea to North Korea. And that was rejected, and it has been made clear to us that there is no way we are going to get to broadcast from South Korea.

Mr. ROYCE. Was there a period of time in the past when we had broadcasting out of South Korea by VOA/RFA?

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. Certainly not by RFA.

Mr. ROYCE. VOA? Years gone by? No?

Ms. CHAO. I do not think we use South Koreans.

Mr. ROYCE. Yes.

Ms. CHAO. And we have now—

Mr. ROYCE. What is interesting to me is South Korea ended its own broadcasts into North Korea in order to—they used to broadcast in to give access to information; kind of a surrogate radio into North Korea, and I chair the Interparliamentary Exchange between the parliamentarians in South Korea and the United States, so I have raised this issue with President Roh directly in my last

meeting with him about why this—why make that decision, when I was in Seoul, and I wondered if there are any international broadcasting efforts into North Korea now that the South Koreans have cut off their broadcasting.

Does Japan? Or are there any other efforts to give people access to information by way of surrogate radio?

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. There is Japanese broadcasting and Russian broadcasting, and I believe the South Koreans are still doing some broadcasting, but it is just—let us say it is less aggressively covering the kind of internal North Korean issues that we deal with. So I think it makes our broadcasting even more important.

Mr. ROYCE. Maybe they are doing external—broadcasting about the world, but no longer broadcasting about the situation in North Korea.

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. Well, it is probably meant for North Korea, but there is a lot more about unification and brotherhood and Korean-ness, and it has been in line with the Sunshine Policy. I think there has been a shift.

Mr. ROYCE. Is their broadcasting beginning to mirror the broadcasting from North Korea?

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. No, that would be hard to do, and I do not want to put down South Korean journalists.

Mr. ROYCE. No.

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. There are a lot of good South Korean journalists, and there are good—

Mr. ROYCE. Sure.

Mr. SOUTHERLAND [continuing]. South Korean publications.

Mr. ROYCE. Well, we are going to hear one of those good journalists on our next panel. I am just sorry he was reportedly intimidated, and the tactics reportedly deployed against him are unfortunate.

Lastly, what anecdotal evidence do you have regarding the impact of defectors listening to RFA and VOA broadcasts? And what has resinated more, the local news, the surrogate broadcasts, or the VOA broadcasts which focus more on international news? And how do the VOA and RFA programming, how does that complement or supplement each other? If you could comment about what each of you do and how it comes together.

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. We do not have much capability of doing what VOA does on international subjects or U.S. subjects or explaining U.S. policy. We are focused really upon being a substitute for the media in North Korea, try to show what a free media would do if it was actually covering North Korea freely.

So we are solely focused on the internal aspects, and we do not do U.S. Government editorials. We do not do, as I said, much international news, although we do cover the six-nation talks and the nuclear issue, because those are so big and they could have a tremendous impact on North Koreans.

In terms of the actual impact that we have had, and I think VOA may have had the same, we have had some sources who tell us that elite people are listening to us; in other words, some of the top people are either assigned to listen to us or they want to know what we are saying. We think we are having an impact also, be-

cause as I mentioned earlier, we get denounced regularly by North Korea with some of this bombastic language you can imagine.

We are part of a—for example, according to the recent attack on RFA, we are part of some American cultural invasion, spreading decadent values to North Korea.

We have got the three defector surveys that I think have been mentioned that show people are listening to both of us, and then we have got very touching quotes from North Koreans once they get out as to how the whole family is sitting and listening to the radio and so forth. So we could read you a few of those today.

Mr. ROYCE. Oh, no, I have heard a lot of these from senior defectors as well, and that one report—

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. And also from senior defectors.

Mr. ROYCE. Yes, that one report—you know, unless you are listening to the—this is inside the polit bureau: “Unless you are listening to the radio broadcasts, you are like a frog in the well, and you don’t know what is going on outside of our country.”

Now, that was part of an internal debate. We know from senior defectors that most of the elites now listen to the broadcasts.

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. Right.

Mr. ROYCE. And I think just the reality of knowing what is actually going on across the country, and especially the level of hardship, affects peoples’ thinking about policy. And over time, hopefully we will have the effect that Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty had according to Lech Walesa and Vaclav Havel.

Ms. CHAO. I would like to add on this on the impact front. I think for—I cannot remember exactly which year but for the last 3 years of the defectors’ survey, there was questions to ask that what have you—what have made you change your mind? And I think there is a high number saying that—I would not quote exactly, but it was high numbers of why they have changed their mind because they listened to the foreign broadcast, and that gives them more information about the outside world, and so that they changed their mind and want to abandon the North Korean regime.

I also want to mention about the kind of broadcast. We do broadcast North Korean focus, but it is not 100 percent, as I had mentioned earlier, about United States policy, about international news and so forth.

Nowadays North Korea, we cannot isolate North Korea just by North Korea itself. It is important to focus on the human rights and everything happening inside of North Korea, and yet that place also, the uranium purchases, for example, in Africa, in Pakistan, and some other underground activities—

Mr. ROYCE. Congo. Yes.

Ms. CHAO [continuing]. That they are heavily involved on the world in general of the terrorism activities, so we report about news and about what is happening so that people would have an understanding about what North Korea is doing and what is the involvement, because information is distorted inside.

And from their central station they hear different stories, so not only do they not hear the negative side of the human rights and so forth, but they do not know where they are. As you just quoted, “the frog in the well.” So I think we supplement each other, and

we provide—that is why people constantly, the anecdotal experience and telling us that we are the lifeline to them from the outside world, which is very important.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. Ms. Lee.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much. I want to thank our witnesses. It was very interesting hearing them. A couple of questions I always really wanted to ask, so I may as well do it now in terms of the overall goals and objectives of these broadcasts.

Oftentimes we hear that primarily the Voice of America, especially, and Radio Free Asia and Radio Marti are really established with a point of—the main purpose is to destabilize the government, and I know there is a fine line between that goal versus providing objective information.

The notion of the free press is one that we all embrace and I assume that Voice of America and Radio Free Asia embrace that also, although I just say that here many—especially in recent years—of our networks primarily promote government policies, and many of us have to find alternative sources of information to really get a balanced view.

So I guess what I would ask you in terms of how these broadcasts work and the overall goals, is it the whole notion of a free press you are trying to promote? Is it to help destabilize the governments, or is it to—do we provide through these broadcasts both sides, balanced information?

Ms. CHAO. Well, I can start, chime in.

Voice of America is an all-inclusive. It is a comprehensive news organization, and we provide information just like any reputable news organization, what is happening. What is happening not just day to day, moment by moment, hour by hour, but provide analysis of why is it. We provide interviews, and through government officials, the congressionals, and also the think tank, and regular people talk about their viewpoint, and reporting could be different.

There is not one single line as to what needs to be reported, or any others. We provide cross-fires, the people debate on our shows, and talking about why they like or dislike certain policies, and we explain the U.S. policy.

Ms. LEE. So you are not asked to include or exclude any type of content or material?

Ms. CHAO. Right, there is nothing that we should say that we should not report on this. Actually, we like to disseminate information as much as widely possible so people on the other end of the receivers can empower themselves, because information is power, and they can decide what they want to do. But without information, it is like a frog in a well again. It is difficult for them to know where to go. So we are not telling them where to go and how to do it. We are just providing the information, like any citizens, that they should be able to have.

Mr. SMITH. If my colleague could yield for just a moment and then go right back to your questioning.

I would like to just recognize some very special guests in attendance who have to leave right now, but have traveled across the Pacific to be with us today, beginning with Mr. Teriyuki Mashimoto, who is Secretary General of the Association of the Families of Vic-

tims, kidnapped by North Korea, and the brother of Ms. Ramiko Mashimoto, who was abducted from Japan by North Korea.

Also with us today are Mr. Takuya Yakota, who is Deputy General Secretary of the association and the brother of Ms. Maguni Yakota, and another abductee victim. And a third, we have Professor Yasohi Yamoto, who is Vice Chairman of the National Association for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea.

I just want to let you know how grateful we are that you came to our hearing. If time permitted, and you did not have to leave, we would have loved to have heard from you. Perhaps you might want to submit some testimony so our colleagues could have a better understanding of what you have been through.

Again, we want to thank you for coming and appreciate your presence here today. Thank you.

Ms. LEE. So I guess to conclude by just asking, if by providing this information, is it the goal, then, you provide information that is objective to people, and then they take that information and use it in whatever way they deem necessary? And then the overall goal, though, is finally to top the North Korean Government through the power of the people?

Ms. CHAO. You are asking our overall goal, our broadcasting. Basically, we are trying to promote enough information to any parts of the world where the part of the world, like North Korea, they do not have it. So by beaming over to them and telling them what is happening not only in their country but elsewhere in the rest part of the world, and specifically also in the United States, they will understand more, and they will be empowered themselves because of the information.

Ms. LEE. So the goal is not to destabilize the government?

Ms. CHAO. No.

Ms. LEE. No. Okay. Mr. Southerland, could you respond to that?

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. No, I think Kelu put it very well. We are not given that kind of marching order. Our orders, or our own mandate, is to try to promote freedom of expression. We do try to give both sides. In a situation like North Korea, it is very hard to get the other side, and we cannot really get much response from them. But what we do is we pay attention to what they say officially.

Let us say there is a big train explosion in North Korea, lots of speculation about what was happening; you know, it might have been an assassination attack against the great leader. If we were in the business of trying to do propaganda, as maybe somebody suggested to you, I suppose we would have played that up.

Ms. LEE. No one suggested. I just read this and heard this.

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. Right. I know this is a Communist perception, but we could have—we did report that as factually as we could, but we did not go with rumors. We did not play sort of a propaganda game, or where we are going to try to use the events.

I think when you provide people with alternative information, we discover they are pretty good at thinking for themselves, and it so happens that a lot of people who listen to us say they have found out some unpleasant things about their government in North Korea, but we are not telling them this is what you have got to think. We are trying to be very factual, very accurate, try to use the best traditions of good journalism.

So one of the amazing things to discover is, despite all the brain-washing, a lot of North Koreans, it does not take too much for them to suddenly say, "Wow, you know, we are not being told the truth." And this is sort of an Orwellian in society where there is one line, nobody gets out of line, so we are providing other views, and that is about it, and it is as simple as that, and it is pretty straightforward.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much.

Ms. CHAO. I would like to add one comment. The people live under the dictatorships, they are very familiar with propaganda, and they know what is it in their blood, so if we provide or anybody provides propaganda, they will turn us off immediately, because we are just like one of theirs.

And so I think it is really important that we uphold our standards of charters and codes, so that they—the fact that they choose the form of broadcast over the state broadcast itself is a testimony.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Fortenberry.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this important hearing, and I apologize for having conflicting duties that have detained me, and I need to pass at this time on any questions.

Mr. SMITH. Ambassador Watson.

Mr. WATSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Listening to the responses, I think these thoughts might have been addressed earlier, but let me ask them again, and I will address this to Mr. Southerland.

It is my understanding that VOA uses medium wave signals while RFA relies on shortwave signals, and some observers claim that because medium wave radios are smuggled in from China, that the RFA broadcasts would reach more North Koreans if funding were available to adopt medium wave radios. Can you respond to that?

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. Certainly. We are actually working with the International Broadcasting Bureau which gives us support to try to find a way to get medium wave. We would like to get medium wave, but it has to be tested by them and evaluated by them.

When we used medium wave back in 2003–2004, we did not have enough information on how effective it was. We now think that, certainly in some parts of North Korea, it would be effective, and we think we have just got to find the right way to combine shortwave and medium wave, because there is also shortwave getting into North Korea, that is for sure.

We were able to—medium wave tends to be rather expensive, so at the time, back a couple of years ago, we collectively had to come to a decision that shortwave might be more effective, or we could use more shortwave frequencies. But we are actually moving in the direction, I hope, of obtaining medium wave.

Mr. WATSON. What about transistors?

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. What about the radios themselves, you mean?

Mr. WATSON. Transmitter radios.

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. We hear that there is considerable use of medium wave, but there is also considerable use of shortwave, and

unfortunately, we do not have, as Kelu said earlier, we do not have a whole lot of statistics from inside North Korea.

We have a relatively small sampling of defectors that we interview, so all I can say is we are working on it. I think we are moving ahead on it, and I hope we can find a solution with the help of the IBB.

Mr. WATSON. I was very interested, Kelu, I am just calling you by your first name because I am not clear on your last name—

Ms. CHAO. Okay, fine.

Mr. WATSON [continuing]. Pronunciation. But you were saying that the people can really detect whether they are given propaganda. How would you know? Is there anything in the balance against how they get the base of their information? I mean, are there underground newspapers that might be out there, word of mouth, or what?

Ms. CHAO. Well, word of mouth probably is a possibility. North Korea is a very difficult place. That is why earlier I tried to talk about the difficulties with the Broadcasting Board of Governors' broadcasting strategy. This is one of the very difficult ones because it is really centrally controlled, tightly controlled, closed-in society, and information-deprived.

So in light of all this, the shortwave and medium wave messages get through, and also the defectors, as Dan mentioned earlier. Nowadays they have tried and managed ways to touch base in their own family that they left behind in North Korea either by sometimes cell phones, sometimes other ways, and so forth. So their stories and so forth have opportunity to get in too.

But importantly, 7 hours a day that we are broadcasting to that part of the place, and people would have opportunities in the night to tune into us for information, so sometimes we were told, like one person heard about it, and they can share with some other members and so forth.

So I think, you know, the information from U.S. International Broadcasters and through word of mouth of themselves just expand our effects and impact.

Mr. WATSON. Well, I really thank the two of you, and maybe this is a question that we save for another time, Mr. Chairman. But I am wondering if part of our discussions with North Korea and other nations would be to open the airwaves so they could be free flow.

Would you have any information on those talks, and whether this would be a part of them, or is this something you can suggest at later meetings? And I do not know if you are going to respond, but if you can, I would appreciate it.

Ms. CHAO. I do not have enough information about what has been discussed between the two governments.

Mr. WATSON. In terms of communications?

Ms. CHAO. Right.

Mr. WATSON. Okay. Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Ms. Watson.

Mr. Southerland, Ms. Chao, thank you so much for your testimony and for your extraordinary work on behalf of the truth and

getting that truth to people who need to hear it. Thank you so much.

Ms. CHAO. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. I would like to now welcome our second panel, which is a panel made up of very heroic individuals beginning with Mrs. Ma Soon Hee, who was born in Hamyong Province in North Korea. She worked as a farmer, homemaker, at a recreational facility for miners, and at an inn. Because her family was suffering from extreme deprivation from 1997 to 1998, Mrs. Ma's oldest daughter decided to go to China to work for a week to make money to help the family. She never returned.

So Mrs. Ma and her other two daughters went out and searched for her and became victims of traffickers. Mrs. Ma saw her two youngest daughters sold in front of her, and learned that her oldest daughter had also been sold. One daughter insisted to the man who had bought her that she would run away if the man did not buy her mother, Mrs. Ma.

Her family had been targeted because she was a widow with three daughters.

After being victimized by an elaborate gang-like trafficking network, Mrs. Ma was eventually able to find all of her daughters and they escaped together in 2003. They entered a South Korean consulate office and struggled and fought with the Chinese guards to eventually make it into the compound and eventually into freedom.

We will then hear from Mrs. Cha Kyeong Sook, who was born in 1955 in Pyongyang, North Korea. She joined the Worker's Party in 1978 and served in the DPRK Air Force from 1972 to 1980, serving in air defense.

She defected from North Korea in 1997 when searching for her oldest daughter who had been sent to Moosan, near the Chinese border, to sell ceramic bowls to raise money because her family was starving. She and her younger daughter went in search of the older daughter only to become victims of human traffickers.

In 1999 and 2000, she was arrested by the Chinese authorities and repatriated to North Korea. She later defected again and raised the money to find her two daughters and rescue her son, and traveled through Vietnam, Cambodia, Mongolia, and Thailand before eventually making it to South Korea in 2003.

We will then hear from Kim Seung Min, who was born in Hechun City in North Korea. He has been an active member of the Exile Committee for North Korea Democracy and was the former Executive Director of the North Korean Defectors Association.

He escaped to South Korea in 1999. Kim served in the North Korean Army as a captain and a writer at the Propaganda Department. He escaped to China but was caught by the Chinese police and turned over to the North Korean National Security Service. He jumped from the train when he was being transported from Pyongyang and escaped to China again. He has been in South Korea since 1999.

Finally, we will hear from Tim Peters, who is a Christian activist whose service has taken him to South Korea where he has lived and labored since 1975.

Under his leadership in 1996, Helping Hands Korea experienced a major shift of focus from projects in South Korea to the needs of

North Koreans in crisis. In response to news of famine in North Korea, Helping Hands Korea launched a small program to provide food aid to the most vulnerable sectors of the North Korean society.

Mr. Peters has also worked as an editor and a speechwriter for the Korean Commission of UNESCO, the Korean National Red Cross, and the Federation of Korean Industries in Seoul. Mr. Peters' Christian and humanitarian activism has been profiled in such publications as the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Washington Times*.

Mrs. Ma.

**STATEMENT OF MRS. MA SOON HEE, NORTH KOREAN
REFUGEE**

Mrs. MA [through interpreter]. Hello, my name is Soon Hee Ma. I left North Korea, escaped from it, and stayed in China for 4 years, and since the year 2003, I have been living in South Korea.

First of all, I would like to thank the Congressmen and -women who are here with us taking time out of their busy schedule, and also I would like to thank Mrs. Susan Schulte who made this opportunity possible. And thanks to all of you who are concerning yourselves with the human rights issue of North Korea.

The time period 1997 through 1998, at this point I had escaped from North Korea, this was a time period where there was a severe shortage of food in North Korea, and even the rationing which was in small quantities even back then had been restricted even further.

So I would sleep overnight. The very next morning I would hear bad news of people having died, and in the morning I would go to work, and on the way to work I would see these people who have died already, and these corpses would lay on streets even until the time that I returned from my work. So people were trying to survive, basically only to survive and in order to survive there were a lot of crimes committed in North Korea.

I have three daughters, and every day and for each meal we had to find ways to get that meal, so each meal was a challenge in itself, and every time we have a meal we have to worry about the very next meal that has to come. And so people would go to mountains and fields, try to find anything that could become a food supplement or something that could replace food, and mechanics would sell their machines so that they could get some food, so every day was a fight and fight for meal. That is what we were doing.

And I had lived with three daughters at the time, and it was almost impossible for me to feed all my daughters by working by myself, and at one point my daughter, the oldest daughter had decided that she is going to help me out, and she decided that she would go to China.

So when she left for China, she had intended to go to China for 1 week, so she took some time off from her work, and she wanted to go make some money, and help me and my family out, but she did not come back. She could not come back, and part of the reason may have been that it was better over there in China. And she sent back a letter instead, and she said in that letter that she would come back in 3 years, and forget me during that time.

And that actually eventually led me and my family going to China. In North Korea, if there is any escapee from the town, there will be heavy investigation by the police, and it would be unbearable to be in that town. So I realized when I had received a letter that I had to go and bring her back, but at the same time I could not go to China on my own because I would be leaving two daughters behind who would be in predicaments themselves. So it was decided that I would bring my two daughters with me at first to go to China to bring my older daughter back.

So we went to this particular house where my older daughter had been housing or housed at. However, once we had gotten there, we realized that she was no longer there. The people who were housing her had sold her off to someone in the town. I guess that is upon the news that we were coming into that house.

And once we had arrived, we realized that it would be impossible for us to return to North Korea, in particular, if we were not to go back with our older daughter. So we had hid in an attic of that house for 3 days, and eventually we also found our ways into the town.

We did not realize at first that the people we were staying with were really traffickers who were professionals who were engaged in the business of selling people from North Korea into houses or people of China.

So we eventually found our way to the town with these traffickers, and just as it must have been done with the slave traders before, my daughters, right before my eyes, were being sold off in this town.

I had two daughters with me at the time, and I know—I do not speak Chinese, but I think the conversation must have been that in the town of Yun Byun that there is a lot of police activities looking for these type of activities, so that my daughters had to be sold to an area closer to Heuk Ryong River, and right there I saw my daughters being assessed as to how much they would be selling for.

And at the time I was of an older age so it seemed that I could not be sold off, but my daughter had realized that this could be the end to everybody being together, and my daughter had pleaded with the traffickers that at least one of the daughter stay with the mom, and part of the reason was that now that we do not have our older sister with us, let us stay together, at least one daughter with the mom, and the daughters had pleaded with the traffickers.

One of the traffickers went outside to make a telephone call, apparently a telephone call. He came back and promised us that at least one of the daughter would be staying with the mom.

But it turns out that they were abusing the very fact that we do not speak Chinese. The traffickers, because we did not speak Chinese, had told us that we could not all go together in a taxi, so they brought two separate taxis. My two daughters went on one taxi, and I was in another taxi, and they told us that we were going to the same direction.

However, at some point in the middle of the city my daughters' taxi had diverted to a different direction than where I was going, and apparently my daughters were being sent to Heuk Ryong River.

And when—at the time my daughters also had realized what was taking place, and I saw them banging on the door of the taxi, and they were crying, and I was doing the same, of course, and I was told that if I were to make a scene right here, the Chinese police would come and take me away, and they told me to just lay low and do not make much move, and that is how we had separated.

So we came to China looking for our oldest daughter, but on 1 day I lost both of my other daughters, and I was in such a despair that I thought at the time death was the only answer to my predicament. But on the other hand I realized that I had to live on so that I could find out about my daughters, and one day, one day that I would bring my daughters together.

In the meantime, my first daughter, my oldest daughter was being taken deeper and deeper into the Chinese Mainland, and at the time she was with a friend who was also being sold off with her, and they realized that wherever they were being taken to, that they were not going to make any money, and that they were not going to be able to help the family out eventually.

So my daughter had talked to the friend to see if they could escape together, but the friend was too afraid to escape together, so my daughter was the only one who had escaped. So in 2 days since leaving the area where I was at she escaped from her capturers and she got to—she had somehow ran into a Korean person, and that Korean person had helped her get into a taxi, which had taken her back to where I was in the original place in China.

So she came back to this first house, and then she came to realize that her family had come to—her family, meaning myself and my two daughter, two other daughters had been sold off in the town, and so she had been talking to the people who were in that house, and she had fled and implored with these people to take her to me, and eventually they did take her to me, so we met up together, and I never thought that we would be able to meet again like that.

And one of the traffickers who had sold off my two other daughters came back one day and told me that she would be taking me to my daughters, and later I find out that she wasn't doing that for free, but she actually had taken money from my daughters so that the trafficker would be able to take me back to my daughters.

So my daughters had been sold off to this area, Heuk Ryong River Province, and they were sold off to Korean family, Koreans who were living in China, and they were in fact married into that family, so the person that was married into was a person who could not get married on his own, so he had purchased her as a bride. And my daughters, one of my daughters, at least, had told the groom that it doesn't matter how hard you try to stop me, it doesn't matter how much of monitoring that you do on me, one day I am going to escape and I am going to escape because my mother is not here with me, and that she is in Yun Byun, and if you want to keep me here you must bring my mother back to me.

So the groom or the husband found this telephone number to call back the trafficker, and told the trafficker to bring the mother back, and the trafficker had apparently told the husband that I can't bring her back to you for free. It is going to take some transportation cost. So the husband had—it was a poverty-stricken fam-

ily as well, but the husband had borrowed some money from outside and given the money to the trafficker so the trafficker would bring me back to my daughters.

So our new lives begun there, but our lives were as following. From early morning to late night we would be working and working and working, and we didn't have any rights. We weren't able to speak our minds, and we were not able to spend the money as we wished to, but the logic was that they had purchased us. They had paid for us so they had the right to use us for whatever need or purpose, and so we were restricted in whatever we do and we were receiving a lot of disadvantages there.

And also there was this Chinese police who would be constantly coming, looking for us, so we would have to hide or escape to other locations for the time being whenever the Chinese police were there.

So we were leading a life where there were no hope, but hope came in the following ways. We were able to receive some broadcasting from KBS, Korean Broadcasting System, and also other Korean TVs. And from these media we were able to hear about and see about escapees from North Korea living in South Korea and how they were able to lead a different life there, and also we were able to hear about the United States and all these other things, so like a frog who was in a well and now outside of the well, I came to realize that there were all these other things.

I don't know what may have happened between North Korea and China during the year 2002, however, what did happen to us was that there were more Chinese police coming looking for us and they were looking for us a lot more and a lot more often. And so the investigations were rising to a higher and higher level. And whenever they did come looking for us to our host family, we would have to go to another—go into hiding, and when we do go into hiding, our host families would have to pay money to the police and it has gotten to a point where our host families could not afford these monies anymore. And so the husbands of my daughters had collectively decided that they could not protect us anymore at this point, and they had agreed that maybe it is better for us, me and my daughters, to go to South Korea.

And once that decision was made in the October of the year 2002, we made preparations and we made our—we did our best to get—find our ways to the Korean consulate in China.

So we went to Beijing to try to get into the Korean consulate in Beijing. However, once we had arrived there, we realized that it would be very difficult to make an entry into the consulate building. It was very heavily guarded. There were always two police patrol cars parked outside, and also there were two guards right outside of the front main gate, and also there were two other guards inside the main gate.

Mr. SMITH. Mrs. Ma, if you would not mind holding that thought. I thank you for your very powerful story of tenacity and courage, not just for you, but for your three daughters as well.

There is a vote on the Floor. I have 2½ minutes to get to the Floor to cast my vote. So, we will have to take a short recess, and I apologize for that, but then we will all hopefully return and hear you and the remainder of our distinguished witnesses.

We stand in recess.

[Recess.]

Mr. LEACH [presiding]. This Committee will come to order.

Mrs. MA. Mr. Chairman, did you want the testimony to continue?

Well, we saw how the consulate had been heavily guarded and so we were there for 3 days, and we couldn't find a way to make an entry into the consulate. And at the time we were non-believers. We were not Christians, but we somehow start praying, and the prayer was to God and we prayed to God that please help us find our way into freedom.

And on this third day, it was also heavily guarded. However, I have decided that I would buy some envelopes that would be big enough to contain documents from a store in front of the consulate, and I was going to pretend that I had some official business in the consulate's office, and that is where I was that morning.

And around the lunch time one of the guards had left his station for whatever reason, and my daughters had decided that it is now or never. So my daughters, and I was right behind them, but my daughters held these envelopes in their hands, and marched into the gate, and they had—at the gate the guard had asked in Chinese what is the envelope, but one of my daughters had responded that you can't see it. They can only look at it from—once I get in there, and they had somehow made their way into the building, so they had passed this outer gate at the time, but once they had gotten to the entrance to the consulate, they were stopped again, and at that time I was a little further back from them and I was very afraid, and I wasn't with my daughters. I guess I was just trying to see what was going to happen.

But once I realized that my daughters had been stopped by the guards, I decided that I needed to go in there and try to help them out.

And there was a lot of body contacts and pushing and shoving at this entrance, but somehow I had managed to get into the consulate building itself, and once I had entered the building, I realized that my second daughter was ere with me, and my first and third daughters, they were not there with me. They were still out there and being held by the guards.

So my second daughter and myself had gone back outside, and we started pushing the guards, and we were pinching them. We were doing whatever we could to have my other daughters released from them, and during all this shoving and pushing the desks were turned over. The buttons became loose, but somehow we found our way back into the building, all four of us.

And on the 25th day of October, 2002, we were finally able to get into the consulate, and eventually find our way to South Korea, which we had only dreamt about till then. And once we had arrived in South Korea, we came to realize that there were all these people who had worked—who had been working for human rights for the North Koreans, that there had been all these activists who had put their sweat and labor into making these things possible.

And once I had arrived in South Korea, we were quite happy, but we were also at the same time quite afraid for the well-being of the other family members who had been left behind in North Korea, so we were somehow a coward for the time being.

And of course, because of the time constraints that we have today I was not able to talk about all the hardships that I had suffered during our stay in China, but there were much hardships.

We are escapees, and we realize that there are people just like the people who are here in this room who have been and who are working for the human rights of the people of North Korea, and we are escapees ourselves, and we should do more, but we have been somehow a coward. We have not been very proactive, and we realize that.

We are escapees. We used to live in a different society, and it was hard for us to being assimilated into the new society of South Korea, and we intend to do our very best to make the best of it. At the same time I would sincerely like to extend my deepest appreciation to everybody who have been working on the human rights cause on behalf of the North Koreans.

[The prepared statement of Mrs. Ma follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MRS. MA SOON HEE, NORTH KOREAN REFUGEE

In 1998, the economy in North Korea was deteriorating every day, and there was no exception for Moosan, where I lived.

The small amount of ration we had been given was no longer available, and people were wandering about in the mountains, fields, and farms to find anything to eat. The number of people dying of starvation increased daily, and dead bodies were abandoned for hours, covered with rags, before they were taken away off streets, stations and inside trains. Residential houses had not seen any lights due to the electricity shortage. The shift production system for factories was only in words, and the factories were practically closed. Workers were more occupied with collecting scrap iron so that they could exchange it for flour from China.

The mountains and fields were running out of grassroots for food. People had to walk miles to the farming areas to find food because the trains were no longer running. If it could be exchanged for food, people were willing to sell just about anything, whether it was personal valuable items, the necessities, or machine parts. Each day was an intense bruising battle. Fortunately, I worked at a noodle factory, and I was able to bring home some cereal for my three daughters and spare them from starving to death. In addition to working at my regular job, I worked on a farm and also tried to sell food from the farm. I was extremely busy all the time and could not afford the time to rest even when I got sick.

My three daughters also worked and helped out with the house work. In mid-June, my eldest daughter was given a one-week vacation from her work in order to find food.

She decided to go to China to make money. She had been told that if she worked for one week in China, she could make at least a few thousand Chinese Won.

I only found out about her plans just before she was getting ready to leave. My daughter had already made up her mind, and I had no excuse to convince her to stay. I could not tell her to stay and starve with me. I only hoped that she would come back safe after her work in China. After waiting anxiously for one week, I received a letter from my daughter.

She explained in the letter that she could not come back and asked for forgiveness for becoming a stumbling block in for the rest of the family. She asked me to consider it as if I never had her as a daughter, but if I could wait three years, she would return with money.

I could not lose my daughter just like that. She was everything in my life even through the difficult times.

Moreover, I knew I would not be able to endure the accusation, condemnation, and sneer for having a defector in the family. I was determined to keep the family together no matter what, and I decided to cross the Tumen River with my other two daughters risking our lives.

After I have made up my mind, I secretly burned our photo albums at night in a warehouse for the fear that our next door neighbor (a spy National Security and Safety Dept.) would find out. I stayed up all night writing a letter to my older sister and organizing our belongings. Easier said than done. Though we had been poor, leaving our hometown where we were born and raised and leaving our beloved brothers and sisters, not knowing when we would see each other again, was ex-

tremely difficult. I realized that it was not something I could have done if it was not for my daughter whom I loved. This is probably why many North Koreans are not able to leave their land no matter how difficult their lives are.

On June 25th at noon, we were on our way after taking a last look at our sweet home. After walking for about 70 miles, we arrived at a rural town near the bank of Tumen River. This entire experience was such a trauma for my youngest daughter, who was 18 at the time, that she experienced severe pain in her heart when we were climbing the mountain. She had to take the first aid medication our guide had brought and rest at times.

We had to hide out in the bush near the river and wait until the night. Then we started to cross the river. It was pitch-dark, and the sound of violent water gave us the creeps. We felt as if the whistle sounds of the border patrol and were afraid they were about to grab us on the back of our neck, so we walked faster and faster.

We held onto each other's hands through the strong current, and we safely cross the river. Soaking wet, we walked into the house I had been told that my oldest daughter was staying. After changing into dry clothes in a basket prepared for people who frequently cross the river, I asked them the whereabouts about my daughter, but they had already sent her to another place knowing that we were coming.

We had no choice but to follow their directions. We climbed up a ladder to an attic through a ventilation outlet in a warehouse for food. A bed of chaff, covered with a sheet of plastic and a blanket was being used as a mattress. We noticed hair pins and books on the floor and realized that we were not the first ones staying in that room.

Food was delivered using a ladder, and during the day, they took away the ladder so that we could not leave. We were able to look out to the street and clearly hear people talking on the street. We could not move around freely the room and could not make any sounds for the fear that someone outside would notice us.

On the third day, we were told that the Chinese police were conducting a search campaign. When it was dark, we went to a nearby mountain and spent the in a shed. Around 2 AM, the owner [of the house] (He was a member of a trafficking ring that sells North Korean women to different places in downtown.) came and told us that a car was here to take us to downtown and he led us to the street.

The taxi was waiting for us with its lights turned off. Every 30 minutes, when the patrol cars passed by, we had to stop the car and hide out in a ditch. After about three hours, we arrived at our last meeting point.

We were told that from this point on we had to walk on a mountain trail for about three hours. We were also told that since it was a dangerous area, if we ran into anyone on the way we should throw a rock at the person and run. Since we might not be able to find rocks on the way, we were told to find 5-6 rocks as big as a fist and take them along.

The husband and wife who took us in the taxi (they were the younger sister of the owner of the house and her husband) drove off in an empty taxi and the owner and our family started walking on the mountain trail. We walked by potato fields and ginseng fields and climbed over the ridges. We walked over three hours with sweaty palms, anxious that someone might see us. Finally we began to see a street and met up with the taxi. The driver was pretending as if he was fixing the car. We got on the taxi and drove into Hwaryong city.

They tried to separate us by saying that if we all get into one car we might be stopped for an inspection. So my two daughters got on the taxi and left first and I was left with the owner. We were supposed to take a bus into downtown. After my daughters left, the owner started suggesting that I stay there instead of going to downtown which was more dangerous. He said that he would let me know the whereabouts of my daughters. I knew what he was trying to do. I thought to myself that nothing would be gained by getting into an argument with him, so I tried to persuade him. I begged him that if he could take me to Yenji, I would see my daughters off and then do whatever he wanted me to do.

After two hours, I was able to go to where my daughters had been sent to. Some other trafficking ring members were already there and I noticed my daughters were crying because I did not arrive for a while. When my daughters saw me they held my hands would not let go. I could not imagine what would have happened if I was not able to see them again.

The traffickers negotiated in Chinese so that we could not understand. We had a feeling that we might be separated again. One of the daughters suggested to the traffickers that if it is difficult for all three of us to stay together, at least one of the daughters should go with me and that otherwise we would not move one step.

One woman who was insisting that she wanted to take the daughters with her stepped out to make a phone call. When she returned, she promised to do as we asked and pay. The daughters I treasured were being sold off like slaves in front

of my own eyes, but there was nothing I could do. I had to comfort myself thinking that it was better this way since it was safer. It was the only choice I had as a "fugitive."

The feeling of relief, however, lasted only for a moment. They had lied to us knowing that we did not understand Chinese. They put us into two separate taxis and when the cars started going separate ways in the middle of downtown. The car with my daughters went to Heilong Jiang, and the car I was in drove off to some other place.

The mother and daughters were banging on the window and struggling to get out, but they blocked the car window and cursed at us. They did not allow us to look out the window and did not even allow us to cry. I had come to China to find one daughter but ended up losing the other two daughters in the broad day light. There were no words to express my devastation, hurt, and frustration. I wanted to kill myself, but I could not die before I had to find my daughters. Each day I waited to hear anything about my daughters with an anxious heart. My hair turn all white and eyes were so swollen that I could not even recognize myself.

One week after, my oldest daughter showed up at where I was staying. It was as if I was dreaming.

In a small apartment in Yenji we cried and cried holding each other but not able to cry out loud. My daughter blamed herself for what happened to the rest of the family. She had run away from the people who had bought her, risking her life, because she wanted go back home. She went back to the house where she had been sold off and heard there that the rest of her family had come to find her and been sold off. She begged them to send her to Yenji and found her way to where I was staying. We stayed all night talking, and she told me all about what she had gone through.

She wanted to make money and help out, but because she was sent away too far, she was not sure if she could ever go back home being so far away, so she decided to run away. She was glad that her running way led her to finding me.

I was somewhat relieved having found my oldest daughter whom I thought I would never see again. After a few days, the traffickers came looking for me because my other daughters were insisting that they bring me over. They told us that in Heilong Jiang, where my second and third daughters were sold off, there were a lot of old bachelors and they wanted me to bring my oldest daughter along with me.

They drafted up a modern version of slavery document saying that because my oldest is bringing along her mother, she would be sold for 500 Chinese Won less. The owner who had been "taking care of" our family did not object after seeing me devastated and torn when we became separated.

Our family was finally reunited after indescribable pain and hardship.

Later I heard that it was a result of my second daughter trying hard to bring me over. Her "husband" was well aware that he did not deserve a wife like her. So he was always watching her for the fear that she would run away from her. My daughter told him one day that "no matter how hard you try to keep me here, I will have to run away. I cannot live here knowing that my mother is waiting for me. So if you want to continue to live with me, you would better go find and bring my mother."

Against his own will my second daughter's husband found out the number for the traffickers. They told him that for 1,000 Chinese Won, they would bring me. He had to borrow money to pay them 1,000 Chinese Won, and that was how the woman came looking for me.

I cannot began to describe all the evil deeds of the traffickers, who were not afraid to separate a mother and her children, sell a parent to the children, and willing to do just about anything for money.

Most North Korean women in China are trafficked and sold off to forced marriages with men who have mental or physical disabilities or are extremely poor and cannot afford to get married.

My daughters also had to work from dawn to dusk, and it broke my heart to watch them. Moreover, there were random inspections by the police, and we never had a day with peace of mind. Fortunately, the neighbors warned us beforehand and we were able to avoid being caught. If we were caught, however, we would have had to pay several hundred Chinese Won to several thousand Chinese Won in fines.

What sustained us through the dark times, when we could not tell what the future held for us, was the news from South Korea we heard through KBS radio programs. Especially, we learned a lot about North Korea that we did not know and also realized that we had wrong information about North Korea. We also learned a lot about South Korea and America. After learning about the lives of North Korean defectors in South Korea, we tried to figure out how we would also be able to go to South Korea.

I began to think that I could not let my children continue to live in China. I wanted them to live in South Korea where they would not have to hide all the time and where they would be able to sing Korean songs as much as they wanted. This became my most important desires.

In summer 2002, after four years of being in China, the Chinese police had tightened their control over North Korean refugees, and many North Koreans were being repatriated. We were seeing the limits of what it was like constantly having to hide. Not only the North Koreans, but also the Korean-Chinese who were living with the North Koreans, would be arrested if caught by the police, and we could not delay any longer. We secretly prepared to leave and began our second adventure toward the South Korean consulate office in Beijing. However we could not help but to hesitate when we arrived at the consulate office building in Beijing. There were two police vehicles permanently stationed in front of the building. In addition, there were two armed policemen guarding the gate and two more armed policemen guarding the building entrance.

We circled around the consulate office for two days and considered our options. On the third day around noon, we held fake document envelopes in our hands and walked straight through the gate. We walked in openly with an attitude that we were supposed to be there. The policemen at the gate looked at us but did nothing. I was inside the gate when the girls got into a physical struggle with the guards at the building entrance. We pushed our way into the building, and realized that the oldest and the youngest were caught by the police and fighting to get away. My second daughter and I went outside the building to try to pull police away from the girls as we screamed. The four women were yelling and screaming, a desk was turned over and clothes were torn, but all four of us were able to make it into the building.

Everything happened so fast. The police put on the siren and round up the people around the building and started interrogating them in police vehicles, but it was already after we had stepped into the territory of South Korea that we had been dreaming about.

We found the freedom for which we were willing to risk our lives, and all four of us living happily in Seoul.

It has not been easy settling in South Korea coming from a system that has been separate and different for over 50 years, but I am only thankful for the fact that we are now legitimately South Korean citizens when we had once been in hiding with no freedom. My oldest daughter now has a husband and a son, and she work for a company. My second and the youngest are in the process of realizing their dreams as singers singing as much as they have always wanted to. My beloved two girls won the first prize for three weeks in a row on KBS' Saturday Family Singing Contest.

All four of us sincerely hope that other defectors do not have to go through the misery we experienced day after day in China.

Moreover, we bow our heads to everyone who considers the pains of North Koreans as their own and are ever so generous with their attention and efforts for North Koreans who suffer numerous human rights violations.

Mr. LEACH. Well, thank you very much for that moving testimony. If there is any error in choice of words you made, it was the word "coward." If there is an award for the bravery of a mother, it would certainly be you.

[Applause.]

Mr. LEACH. Before turning to our next witness, let me apologize. The institution of Congress runs disjointedly. We have votes going on now, and so I apologize. Most Members are on the House Floor. I have voted and will have to go vote again as did Chairman Smith.

But we want to proceed as well as we can, and our next witness is Mrs. Cha, and I apologize, I have a bit of a cough today. But Mrs. Cha Kyeong Sook was born in Pyongyang; served in the Air Force, and she will tell her story now of defection. Mrs. Cha.

**STATEMENT OF MRS. CHA KYEONG SOOK, NORTH KOREAN
REFUGEE**

Mrs. CHA [through interpreter]. Hello. My name is Cheong Sook Cha. I had arrived in South Korea on the 19th day of June, year 2003.

First of all, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Congressmen who had made this a possibility, a reality for us, and also in particular I would like to extend my appreciation to Mrs. Susan Schulte, and other human rights activists.

My hometown is in Pyongyang in North Korea, and in the year 1994, Kim Il Sung had deceased, and since the passing of the leader—strike the leader, please. Since the passing of Kim Il Sung, the rationing for food in Pyongyang had stopped. And at the time I had three children, and these three children I was responsible for and I saw them going hungry every day, so I would go to these mountains called Mo Ran, and from the mountain I would collect the weeds and bring those weeds and put them together with some corn and some other stuff, whatever I could find, and make porridge to feed my children.

And I had my son whose face had been badly affected because of the side effects of some of the food that he had eaten, so every time I would look at him I come to realize that as a mother, that I had not fulfilled my obligations, and that I would until the day of my death would be immensely regretful.

It must have been some toxic elements within some of the weeds that I had fed. My son had gone into a coma for 15 days, and back then, of course, I did not believe in God. I did not know about Christianity. All I knew was Kim Il Sung, and so I didn't know what to do. And after 15 days, my son came around and he woke up, but it left a scar on his face. It was as if he had—his face had been burned.

So as a mother, I did not think I was doing my job right. My children were going hungry, and there was this bowl, rice bowl which my mother-in-law had given to me, and this was from the Japanese Imperial period. So I thought maybe this had some sort of a value because it is such an old item. So I had sent my oldest daughter to an area called Moosan in province of Ham Kyung Buk Do.

But this daughter, which had been my first daughter, who had gone to see if the bowl had an antique value, she would not return for 1 month, so I was worried. So I left my son in Pyongyang, and took my 16-year-old daughter with me. At the time I did not have any pass to go to different towns, but we decided to leave anyway on the 17th day of September.

So this was in year 1999, and we had eventually arrived in Moosan on the 24th day of September, and we had heard—gotten the news once we had gotten there that my first daughter was no longer there, but she had actually gone to China, and I was there for about a month thinking, and I came to the following conclusion, that my son, who is 12 years old, would be okay back home because we have relatives back home, and I was concerned about my first daughter, and we have decided that we would cross the border together, me and my second daughter.

So on the 11th day of October in 1997, with my 16-year-old daughter, we have decided to cross Tumen River, and this was

about 6 o'clock in the evening, and the crossing the river was not that easy. And as we were crossing, and as we were getting to the midpoint of the river, my daughter had slipped on this rock, and she was getting swept away by the waves in the river, and I was trying to help her, and I was trying to help her, but I ended up getting swept into the water also.

Now, in October, the Tumen River becomes very cold and it was reaching the temperature of minus 10 to minus 15 degrees Celsius, and we were getting swept in the water for about 30 minutes, and somehow we had gotten to the other side of the river, and at the time, of course, I did not believe in God so I was looking to the heaven and looking for the grandfather in heaven and grandmother in heaven. And I took out my salt, trying to wake my daughter, and after she had came around, we walked a distance, and then we came to this Chinese town.

And we came upon this house, and I had asked for help finding my daughter. I gave them my daughter's name and how she looked, but the host family responded that it does not matter if you are an old person or a young person, or if you are a woman or a male, whoever crosses the Tumen River become victims of traffickers, and by just giving the name and how they looked, it is not going to be enough to find my first daughter.

So I told them that, well, I am going to try to advertise to find my daughter. Why don't you help me find a job. And eventually I found a job. Went to this house as a housekeeper, and my daughter came with me. And once I had entered the house I came to realize that there were these other North Korean escapees there. In fact, there were six women ages ranging from 30 to 21 to 19 to other ages, and this whole family actually—the head of the house was a male and he had a wife of his own, but every night he would bring—he would take one of us, somebody from our group to have an intercourse.

So this 19-year-old girl who was sleeping next to me, one night she was awakened and the host was trying to take her away, and have intercourse with her, and apparently she had refused, and when she had refused the host put some heavy metal objects inside of the vagina of this young girl, and the young girl who at the time was a virgin was trying to protect her virginity, and I know—I saw just having taken place afterward, and when I realized these things taking place, and when I thought about my younger daughters, I just could not get to sleep, and I wept the whole night.

And then there was this instant with this 30-year-old woman, the host was trying to have an intercourse with her, and she refused, and when that happened the host would cuff her legs, tie those legs—tie her legs to the legs of a table, and then from that posture he would proceed to rape her, and these things were taking place to the escapees from North Korea, and these are the things that have happened right before my eyes, and these are the things that I would never ever be able to forget.

And after about a week having stayed at the house, I was sent to the market, and when I had came back from the market my second daughter, who was 16 years old at the time, was not there. I could not find her, and I had asked the host family where she was, and they said that they did not know.

So from there on for about half a month I would go to all the markets in the town trying to find her and trying to find her, but I could not find her, so I came to the realization that I had come to China looking for my first daughter but now I have lost my second daughter as well, and my heart had sunken to a level that I do not know, and I could not even shed tears. Even if I wanted to cry, my tears would not roll out anymore, and whenever I try to speak my words would not come out, and that is how I felt and that is the condition that I was in.

Mr. LEACH. Excuse me. Before you translate, I apologize. We have 4 minutes to vote on the House Floor, and so Chairman Smith and I will have to recess the hearings and return. It will be about 15 minutes.

So the Committee is in recess, at which point when we return we will receive the translation of the last statement, and then continue with Mr. Cha. The Committee is in recess.

And I might say it is going to be hard to forget what Mrs. Cha has just said. Thank you.

[Recess.]

Mr. SMITH [presiding]. The Committee will come to order.

What we are discussing today will reach far beyond these two Subcommittees. It will be widely disseminated. It will help us to craft, hopefully, a more meaningful and more aggressive response to the ongoing human rights abuses of North Korea, and as well as the complicity by the People's Republic of China, especially as it relates to trafficking. And as I said in my opening statement, their lack of responsiveness to true refugees, they are signatories to the refugee convention. They have violated their responsibilities, I think, with impunity. I have raised it with high officials in the UNHCR and elsewhere, and it continues to be a point of serious disregard for international law by the People's Republic of China.

And so I again want to thank all of you for your testimonies and for your patience at today's hearing with these breaks, with votes.

I think, Mrs. Cha, we were still waiting for the translation, if I am not mistaken, and then we will proceed.

The INTERPRETER. Yes, Mr. Chairman. With your indulgence, I will continue with Mrs. Cha's earlier testimony.

Mrs. CHA [through interpreter]. And I found this person who was 10 years younger than me, a Korean ethnic person, and he had helped me find my second daughter, and eventually I did find her, and I found out that she had been sold off for 4,000 yuan, and we were trying to get her back, and eventually I did get her back, and the way we had gotten her back was by paying that 4,000 yuan back to the person who had bought my daughter, and then that is how we came about being together after that.

The INTERPRETER. Would you like the testimony to continue, sir?

Mrs. CHA [through interpreter]. So I got my daughter back, and I was at the time living in an area called Pal Do in the City of Pyongyang, and during the daytime I would go up in the fields and work on the fields, and during the nighttime, because of the eyes of the Chinese police, I had to sleep with the cows.

And in May of the year 1999, it must have been something between China and North Korea, the North Koreans were escaping to China were fewer in numbers, and particularly as to the woman.

So the human traffickers who were mostly made up of Korean ethnicity, they were having a hard time finding people to sell.

So what had happened was that these traffickers would find the people that they had sold before, and they kidnapped them again, and resell them.

And so that during the May of that year, me and my daughter had been kidnapped by one of these traffickers around 9 o'clock in the p.m., but we had somehow escaped, and also—and again, on the second day of July in 1999, 11 o'clock in the p.m., we were kidnapped, and from there we were taken to the City of Sah Gwa in Ham Kyung Province, and I think the plan had been that the traffickers would be selling us at some point in the inner Mongolia for the price of 10,000 yuan, and we were in the process of getting transported to Gil Lin.

However, the Chinese police found out about it and they had apprehended us. So once we were arrested, we were sent back to North Korea. This was in the August of year 1999, on the tenth day, and we were sent to the Province of Hong Kyung Buk Do.

So I was in the stage of being kidnapped between the time period July 3rd through August 10th of 1999, and this was in the City of Hwa Ryong, and at the time—and then after that we had been arrested by the Chinese police, and once we had been arrested and at the location where we were collected together, I saw that there was a young girl. She was 12 years old, and she had apparently been kidnapped—herself also had been kidnapped and was being sold.

And eventually I have been sent back to North Korea, Moosan, Ham Kyung Buk Do, and then there I had met this woman who had been sold to China by her husband, and she had eventually gotten pregnant while in China, and she decided that she wanted to turn herself into the Chinese police so that the Chinese police would send her back to North Korea.

And also on the 10th day of August at Moosan, me and my daughter, we were wearing these jeans, and the jeans—the North Korean authorities decided that this was American imperialism, and they made us take our jeans off.

And so we were collected in this location in North Korea, in Moosan, and in this location there were 10 of us who had been arrested and sent back to North Korea, and at that location they made us take everything off so we were all naked, and they would go through our hairs, and also our other body parts to see if we were hiding any money.

And also for about 60 minutes they would make us do these physical exercises, very difficult physical exercises where we would be holding our heads up, hands to the front of us, and sit up and sit down and stand up, and sit down and stand up in this manner for about 60 minutes. And once we are done with that type of exercise, they would then check our crevices to see if there were any cavities that were containing any type of money or expensive stuff.

And the following things I have witnessed while I was there. There was this pregnant woman who was pregnant into her sixth month, and they said that this was a seed from Chinese people, and they started kicking the stomach of that pregnant person with their military boots.

And also there was this baby who was 2 months old and they said again that this was the blood of Chinese people, and while the baby was sleeping one of the guards lift a very heavy book and throw that book down on the head of the little baby, and I saw the baby pass out.

And then we were sent to another location where we were going through the same type of searches on our bodies, and then eventually we were sent to another location where we would do collective works, and the collective works would start at 5 o'clock in the morning and end at 10 o'clock at night. And for young people they would be sent to the mountains to collect woods, and for old people, including myself, we would be sent to the fields to work on the fields.

My daughter was younger, so she was sent to the mountain to collect wood, and I was on the fields, and so naturally we were separated at that point, and on the third day of my being there I was working in a corn field, and I told them that I had to go and pee, or urinate, and from there I had escaped from that location.

So from there on I had run away for a long distance, for about 60 ri in Korean distance, and I had eventually ended up at the Tumen River again, and this was on the 13th day of August, and during that time in North Korea there were some heavy raining, and I looked at the river, and it looked like the water was not that deep, but once I had gotten into the water it was over my height, and I was thinking that, oh, no, I am getting swept away, and soon as I had thought about that I passed out. I must have passed out, and then when I came to there was this old Chinese lady looking on me.

And I eventually found out that there was this young Chinese man who was working on the field at the time and he had seen me come into the river, but I did not come back up, and then eventually that I was getting swept away in the river, so he jumped in and saved me, so I was able to survive.

But there were Chinese police constantly running their routes and looking for us, so during the daytime I had to go into hiding, and during the nights I would be sleeping in the corn fields, and eventually I found my way back to the City of Pal Do, which was the city I was in in China, and this was the place that I knew. Of course, I was treated like a slave in that place. However, this was the only place where my daughters knew how to get in touch with me because they had a telephone.

And later I found out that my younger daughter, the second daughter who I had left behind, she was blamed for my escaping, and she was eventually beaten and tortured because I was not there, and some time in the middle of November, the same year, she had escaped and found her way back to me.

And her finding way back to me was a difficult one as well because she was 16 years old, and she had waded her way across the river and once she had crossed the river she was again kidnapped by the traffickers, and she was taken to various different cities, but she didn't want to get sold again, and she refused, and she was not going to get sold off again.

Then one night the Chinese police got a hand of her—have arrested her, and after arresting her the Chinese police themselves

were trying to sell her off to other Koreans in China, and she did not want to get sold off again, and on this one particular day she had jumped off from a second floor after having gotten rid of her ankle cuffs and then eventually that is how she found her way back to me.

And an instance had occurred in between while she was being dragged by these traffickers, in the city of Har Vin she somehow got hold of some mice poison and she ate that, and she was eventually taken to a hospital for treatment for that.

And then again on the 11th day of July, year 2000, after we had come together, me and my daughter, we had been once again kidnapped by the traffickers, but we had refused to be sold off, and after awhile we had been apprehended by the Chinese police again, and then we were sent back to North Korea again.

So eventually we had been sent back to Moosan and this was around the 26th day of July, and we had been sent back to the same location where we had been held before, and just as it had been the year 1999, body searches were carried out again, and for a woman whose breasts were bigger, they would be lifting their breasts to see if anything was hidden under those breasts, and same type of physical exercises were carried out so that cavity searches could be taken.

And after that, I was sent to this different type of cell, a cell that I had not seen before, and I was sent to this cell for about 10 days. The reason being I found out that my younger brother who had been back—who I had left in North Korea prior to my leaving for China, he had come into China looking for me, and then at the time he had received some help from South Koreans, and that became a reason for him being later arrested and later having sent to a gulag.

Eventually I found that he had been killed by a firing squad in that gulag, and that was the very reason why I was sent to this particular cell, because the North Koreans wanted to know if I had any kind of type of connection with South Korea or South Koreans.

So we were interrogated, me and my daughter, for a whole week, but they could not find anything, so they released us to another location in Chung Jin. So we were sent to this location in Chung Jin, and they had this room where we were allowed to sleep, but we actually could not sleep because the floor had contained all this different types of insects, including many ticks.

So during the daytime we would have to go out to the field to work. Once we come back in to sleep, we would actually hang onto the sills on the windows of these rooms to sleep because we could not lie down.

So some time in the early part of September, we were being transported to Chung Ryun, and on the way I and my daughter had managed to escape, so we escaped and came back to our hometown. And after having gotten to our hometown we decided that we would try to escape again to China, and this was on October 20th of the year 2000.

And once we had crossed the river, we were again apprehended. Again, we were taken by the traffickers and the traffickers were trying to sell us again, and then we were at a railroad, at which

point we were able to again escape from these traffickers, and I myself found a way back to Pal Do.

And eventually my second daughter in December of the same year had found her way back to Pal Do, and we were there together briefly, but we had decided that in this City of Chung Yun there were way too many kidnapppers and traffickers, and that we had to go to another city to live. So in the January of the year 2001, we went to Chung Doh in the Province on San Dong, and there we had worked and we made some money, and I advertised because I want to find my oldest daughter, my first daughter, so I advertised in this publication called *Sung Gwa Dong*, and in that publication I have stated that Mother Kyeong Soon Chat is looking for her first daughter.

And then in Chung Doh, I had found work in a South Korean company, but I was fired from that company after 3 days of work only because I was a North Korean, and eventually I had bought a fake I.D. from a Korean ethnics in China for 500 yuan, and with that I had found a job in this karaoke place, and I was working as a cook in that place.

In this karaoke place, there were five young women who had been trafficked into that location from North Korea, and after some time I had helped these five women escape from the karaoke bar.

But because I had helped them escape, the karaoke bar decided that they will not pay me for the work that I have done in the past 3 months, so they would not pay me at all, and I had to buy some cosmetics and give it to one of the managers at that location as a bribery so that they would release my money, and eventually they did release the money after about 2 weeks.

And on the 15th day of December, I had this good news from my first daughter. She had found her way to me and she called me, and I found out that she had been sold off to a location in Mok Dan River, and that she was okay. She was doing okay.

And it was the time for me to look for my son now, so I had gotten in touch with people back in North Korea, and my son, because his family—his mother was not there anymore, my son could not go to school, and they sent him to a juvenile detention center.

And all these things had taken place within the span of 6 years, and most of the time I had lived in China, and this was a time period when it was really hard for me because all my three children were at one point or another not with me, and this was maybe short number of years, but it has been a very, very long and difficult period for me.

So I had gotten my son back on March 6th of the year 2003, and after all 6 years I have gotten all my children back with me, and I realized that if we had continued to live in China, that we would be somehow either kidnapped or arrested, and that this was no way to live, and we wanted to go to South Korea.

We had gotten in touch with the consulate office in Chung Doh of the South Korean consulate, but the consulate had advised us that they could not vouch for the safety of us because of the guards outside of the consulate, and that is why we decided that we want to go to Vietnam first.

And once we had gotten to Vietnam, we had a lot of help from NGOs, especially certain missionaries, and with their help we had

gone to Cambodia after having walked about 6 hours to get to the border, and from there eventually we were sent to Korea, South Korea in October and had the glory of becoming a South Korean citizen.

Now I am very happy whereas before I did not have my children with me. I have all my children with me, and I am very happy.

And the refugees in Korea, South Korea, are being treated well by the Government of South Korea, and there are NGOs who are helping us, and also there are many people I came to realize who are working on the human rights issues of North Koreans, and I came across many human rights activists, and from these people and the activities that they have carried out, I have found strength and courage, and from the despairs of before now I feel that I am strong enough to come here before you, and speak of my past which had been very dark.

Again, my deepest sincere appreciation to the Congressmen for this opportunity, and also to Mrs. Susan Schulte. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mrs. Cha follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MRS. CHA KYEONG SOOK, NORTH KOREAN REFUGEE
HUMAN TRAFFICKING, ITS PAIN AND THE CURRENT SITUATION

The Food Distribution Center in Pyongyang stopped distributing food at the end of June 1995.

After being discharged from the Army, I worked as a district leader. I began to worry we would all die of starvation if we just waited for food distribution from the government, which never came.

I had so much to do as the district leader during the days, and had to work every night to make tofu with beans. I sold tofu to buy corns, with which I fed my children. Sometimes, I went up the hills around Pyongyang and picked wild grasses to augment our corn meals.

In May 1996, my son came back from school complaining he could not see clearly. He lied down on the floor. I ran to the local clinic for help. They told me my son had grass poisoning, but they did not have any medicine for him. I tried to clean my son's stomach with rice water and mung-bean gruel. My son recovered in about a month, but it was a living hell. He still has scars on his arms from that sickness. I cannot recollect the time without tears. He was lucky. I heard about an old woman who lost her nose from the grass poisoning.

Only then, I realized we were living on poison like many others in the city. I could not wait to get poisoned to death. I told my oldest daughter to take an antique bowl and go to Moosan. I thought she could trade it for rice.

One month passed and I did not hear from my daughter. I was so worried I left my 12-year old son to my husband and left the house with my younger daughter to find my older daughter. I found out my daughter could not sell the antique bowl, and went to China to make money. It was in October 1997. I jumped into Tumen River. The water was bitter cold, but I did not care. I had to go to China to find my daughter. I held tight my younger daughter's hand in the cold river.

We were in China now. We met some nice people. They took us in and fed us. They even gave us some dresses to change. I explained how my older daughter looked like. They said they never saw her. Much later, I found out all Chinese living close to the border were all involved in human trafficking. They were all crazy. They bought and sold North Korean girls with the help of North Koreans.

I was desperate to find my daughter, but I ran into a dead end. I could not turn around and go home . . . I went from village to village looking for my daughter. I was hired as a maid in Hwa Ryong City. I thought I was hired as a maid, but when I got to the house where I was supposed to work as a maid, there were five North Korean girls in that household.

The beast in that household slept with this and that girl every night right next to his wife. There was a 16-year old girl who resisted the rape. The beast put a wrench into her private part. Blood poured out of that little girl's private part down to her legs. I could not watch, but this kind of barbaric atrocity happened almost everyday.

After a week, I went out to get some groceries. When I came back, my younger daughter was not home. The beast said he did not know where my daughter was. Now I lost both my daughters! I went from house to house in Hwa Ryong City asking about my two daughters . . . I went to Yenji . . . I went to Ryong Jeong . . . Nobody knew or saw my daughters. Everybody eventually found out everything that happened in China. My daughter was sold by the Beast to somewhere in Heilong Jiang. I learned about it much later.

I cried everyday. A Korean-Chinese man approached me. He suggested that he would buy back my daughter if I worked for him at his house. I had no choice. He bought back my daughter for 4,000 Yuan (\$400), and we worked for him as servants at his house. We worked on his farm during the day, and slept in cow's stable at night. We literally lived like animals and lived with animals. I was happy, though, that I want able to be with my daughter.

The man was 10 years younger than I was at the time. He became my master and husband eventually. He ordered me to cultivate a mountainside into a farmland, approx. 5,000 Pyung (about 3 acres). He did not work, but drank everyday. When he got drunk, he beat us. He wanted to fight with me. He would say, "I will sleep with your daughter if I win. I will sleep with you if you win." He turned into a beast and did horrible things. He would try to bite off my nipple. I wanted to hang myself so many times if it were not for my daughter.

One day in May 1999, I was watching TV after a long day at the farm. Several ruffians came and tried to take us. We fought back like mad, and a few people in the village came to help. We escaped at the time, but eventually were kidnapped by the human traffickers two months later on July 2, around 11:00 at night. We tried to escape through the window, but they pushed a dagger into my breast. I was more horrified than in pain. I knew I was going to be sold again. We were taken to a market place in Hwa Rong City, and were sold to some place in Inner Mongolia for 10,000 Yuan (\$1,200). I wanted to die. They did not care. When we arrived at Bok Dong in Hwa Ryong City, there were some gangsters waiting to snatch us. A fight broke out between them. We ran away. They all came after us. Someone called the Chinese police. The police took us to a detention center, and sent us back to North Korea on August 10, 1999, and were promptly taken to the Moon San detention center of the National Security Bureau.

There were ten women prisoners in the cell, and all of us had to take off our clothes, stark naked. We had to take off brassieres and panties. We were ordered to lift our arms sideways. We were ordered to stand up and sit down sixty times. They made us do that to get everything out supposedly hidden inside the body. They searched our hairs. They took some women and made them shake their breasts.

There was a pregnant woman among us. They said she was pregnant with a Chinese seed, and kicked the pregnant woman in the stomach with their feet. Another woman was holding a two-month old baby. They said the baby was also a Chinese seed, and beat him on the head with a book. Everybody screamed.

My daughter and I wore blue jeans at the time. They said the blue jeans were from the Yankees, and confiscated them. We were taken only in underwear to the so-called Discipline Center of the Security Bureau in Moo San City. Our daily meals there were composed of rotten flour paste in a pumpkin soup. We were forced into hard labor during the day, and were drilled as in the military in the evening. We had to fight off fleas, ticks, and bugs in the bed every night.

On August 14, 1999, I escaped from the camp when the guards were not looking. I had to run and walk 15 miles through the mountains on my bloated legs. I came back to Tumen River, and jumped into the river. It was rainy season, and the river was high. I was floating in the river, and lost consciousness. When I came back to, I found myself in a strange house. One old Korean-Chinese woman was looking down at me.

She told me that a Korean-Chinese youth saw a body floating in the river. He pulled the body out of the river, and it was me. I escaped from North Korea again, but I did not know where my older daughter was. My younger daughter was still back in the camp. I wanted to die thinking about them. . . . I did not want to live.

I heard much later that my younger brother escaped from North Korea in August 1999 looking for his sister in China. He was arrested by the North Korean security agents, and was taken back to North Korea. They found out my brother met with South Koreans in China. He was charged as a political criminal for that and taken to somewhere nobody knows where. My daughter left behind was also beaten up severely when they found out I escaped.

My eighteen-year old daughter miraculously found me in Ryong Jeong City. She escaped again, crossed the Tumen River again, was taken to the human traffickers again, from Toh Moon to Dan Dong, from Dan Dong to Shen Yang, and then to some

other places. She went through all that to find her mother. I despair even now when I think about what she went through to find me.

I will never forget July 25th. On that day, we were repatriated again and taken directly to Chong Jin Detention Center. We felt as if we were dead. We were taken to a cell full of fleas, ticks and bugs. Ticks were killing us. They were in my navel, they were in between my fingers, they were in my ears, and they were all over me. When I woke up in the morning, several ticks fell off my body. They were as big as peas!

I guess all detention centers were the same, but the Chong Jin camp was where every prisoner was to die. We tried to sleep hanging on the windows like bats, but there were mosquitoes at the window. We were there only one month, but we saw things that we could not believe with our own eyes. One pregnant woman gave an early birth to a baby after only 8 months. The baby was wrapped in a blanket and was thrown out on the cold concrete floor. The baby was crying, and the mother was taken by the guards to somewhere. One woman got syphilis in China. Her inside had to be cleaned everyday with salt water.

On August 30th, we were being taken to the Security Bureau in Pyongyang. While the guards were dozing off, we escaped again. We spent two months at Chong Jin Railroad Station as adult "Kt-Che-Bees(street beggars)." We crossed Tumen River again on October 20, 2000. We met this guy, Taek, in Seung Sun Village of Hwa Ryong City. We lived in a cave in the cliff, and did whatever Taek ordered us to do. He wanted pumpkin seeds everyday, and we gave him pumpkin seeds everyday. One day, Taek told us we had to move to San Dong Province. We thought we were being sold again. We felt hopeless.

The Han Race in San Dong Province did not understand a Korean word. We boarded a train, and the train stopped at Cho Yang Chun Station. Fight broke out among the Hans, and we jumped off the train. We went back to Ryong Jeong City, now familiar to us. We stayed in Ryong Jeong for a while, and then moved to Kyo Joo City, where I got a job as manager at a Karaoke place. I was paid a salary there.

One day, five North Korean girls came to the Karaoke place, sold by human traffickers. They looked like my daughters. They were abused sexually everyday by the customers. I showed them the way how to get away from the place. On the day they escaped from the place, I placed an ad in the local paper. "Mother Cha Kyeong Sook is looking for her daughter!" In the ad, I left a short address where we could be reached.

Two months later, the miracle happened. My older daughter showed up. I did not know whether I was happy or sad at the sight of my daughter. My whole body began to tremble. I could not believe that three of us were finally together under the same roof. I cried. I cried to wash away all my pains, all my sorrows, and all the shame that I had to go through. I cried with my daughters. We will never part again! We will die together!

I could not cry forever with my daughters. I crossed Tumen River again, this time back to North Korea. I had to bring my son out this time. I brought my son out on March 6, 2003. My husband died already. I found my son at the No. 9 Orphanage in Pyongyang City. I did not cry when I found my son. I cried enough already with my daughters.

Six years. Six short years, or six long years. I became an old woman in that six years. My hairs turned gray. I left my six years of pain in China, and came to South Korea with my three children on June 10, 2003.

I feel sorry to my dead husband writing this story. You were the only husband to me. I was raped and abused by so many devils, and beg of you to forgive me. I had to live to save our children, but I cannot face my children with my eyes looking at them straight.

If I ever see my husband in the other side, I will kneel in front of him. I want to be his wife again. I want to pray for so many girls who suffered and wasted their lives in China and other countries.

Mr. SMITH. Mrs. Cha, thank you so very much for a very concise testimony. You have provided us a very thorough insight into the plight of refugees caring so much for your children. The mothers' love that you and Mrs. Ma have shown is an inspiration to all of us, and we are so glad you are all united and living in freedom, so thank you so very much.

Mr. Kim, if you could proceed.

**STATEMENT OF MR. KIM SEUNG MIN, MEMBER OF THE EXILE
COMMITTEE FOR NORTH KOREA DEMOCRACY**

Mr. KIM [through interpreter]. Thank you very much for this opportunity. I have been advised that I should cut my testimony short. I should keep my testimony short.

Just as Mrs. Ma and Mrs. Cha have spoken before, deepest appreciation sincerely from my heart to all the activists, and in particular, the Congressmen who had made this possible.

I am an escapee myself and also I work on Radio Free North Korea.

The INTERPRETER. I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. I am having a difficulty hearing his testimony. I am just going to ask for the seats to be switched.

Mr. KIM [through interpreter]. Last year, in the City of Daegu in South Korea, there was a university that was being held, so there were young college kids from North Korea who were visiting South Korea, and at the time it was raining, and there was a poster of Kim Il Sung there, and the poster was being soaked wet by the rain, and once they have seen that, they started crying, and there was an outcry that this should not take place.

So reality is as such, that the North Koreans are not only physically but also psychologically very close to being in death. North Koreans now, they need food, but more than that they need freedom in their psyche, and to satisfy the needs of their psyche, I believe we need to bring about the truth to these people, truth as to what is going on outside of their world, and that would only be realizable through radios, and then North Korean regime realizes that and they do their very best to stop all these frequencies coming in from outside.

But stations such as the Voice of America and Radio Free Asia, they continue to send their frequencies to North Korea, and they bring news of these free words to the people of North Korea.

Now, while these things are taking place, South Korean Government had met with the North Korean Government at ministerial level, and they had decided based on the request from the North Korean side that the South Korean Government would stop any broadcast going into North Korea.

Now, this had been something of a victory for the dictator in North Korea, but that resulted in despair and loss for the people of North Korea, and that is why the refugees in South Korea had come together and decided to establish this Radio Free North Korea.

And of course, we started our broadcasting, and the first order of business was to broadcast through the Internet, and during the ministerial level talks in the year 2004 between South and North Korea, North Korea had demanded that this type of broadcasting be stopped.

And then there are these other groups made up of young people who are being manipulated by the North Korean side. These people would be sending blackmails and threatening telephone calls to us trying to stop us, and also they would be holding press conferences. And as a result, we had to move our studio three times already, and also in the middle of Seoul, not Pyongyang, we were harassed

by the power of the people who were being manipulated by Kim Jong Il, the dictator.

And these people who are being manipulated by Kim Jong Il, they are waiting for the news that we will close our studios because we do not have money, and because they are being manipulated by the propogandas of the dictator, these young people are wanting our Radio Free North Korea to be closed at some point.

And also because there is a reconciliation and cooperation that is being pursued by the South Korean Government, there would be certain people in South Korea who would want to see our station closed. But just as the regime in North Korea knows, we know the power of these frequencies going into North Korea, and we know that the message of hope through our frequencies is very powerful, and that is precisely why we need to continue to have broadcasting by the refugees, and in particular, that this should be actually strengthened.

Respected, Mr. Chairmen, and Congress, and all the other participants in this hearing, we have Korean Assembly, which is located in the middle of Seoul, only 30 minutes away from our station, but we could not go to our assembly, and that is why we have to get on an airplane and come to the U.S. Congress.

My message is simple. Please help us. Help us refugees broadcast to the people of North Korea.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Kim, thank you very much for your testimony, and it is, I think, unfortunate in the extreme that our friends and our fellow parliamentarians in South Korea are not more interested in the work that you do. Perhaps they are, and they are afraid of North Korea's retaliation, but we are delighted to have you here, and thank you for the great work you are doing.

Mr. Peters.

Mr. KIM. Thank you very much.

**STATEMENT OF MR. TIM PETERS, FOUNDER/DIRECTOR,
HELPING HANDS KOREA**

Mr. PETERS. Chairman Smith, and Chairman Leach, and Committee Members, I would very much like to thank you for this opportunity to share my recent experiences relating to North Korean refugees and the extreme difficulties they face in China and surrounding countries.

I believe that this hearing is most timely and appreciate your attention to this grave human rights problem. My testimony today will be a brief summary of views that are contained in my prepared statement.

As was the case when I was invited to appear before the International Relations Committee first in May 2002, then again in April 2004, I would like to give prominent place to the fellow activists who have sacrificed so much in rescuing North Korean refugees.

In 2002, I highlighted the imprisonment in China of South Korean Pastor Chun Ki Won. Last year, among others, I cited South Korean Choi Young Hoon, who to this day remains detained in China for a period that now approaches 3 full years in January, coming January.

In my written statement, I will include a fuller listing of all known detained activists and refugees, but I would like to emphasize one case in particular today, with your permission.

This year the arrow of misfortune has struck closer to home. Fellow American Pastor Phillip Jun Buck, aged 68, was detained in May of this year for his courageous work of sheltering and protecting North Korean refugees. I mention Pastor Buck in part because I have had the privilege of knowing him personally, and the honor of being among the supporters of his refugee shelters in recent years.

Phillip Buck would sometimes appear unannounced at our weekly Catacomb meetings in Seoul and share uplifting testimonies from his refugee shelters in China. Due to an auto accident during his years as a missionary in Russia, he suffers from sleep disorders that pose particular hardships in prison conditions in China.

I would ask, Mr. Chairman and Committee Members, that just as you exerted such swift and critical influence with the Chinese Government that resulted in the release of Chun Ki Won in August 2002, that you would give equal attention and commitment to the unjust and harsh imprisonment of fellow American Pastor Phillip Jun Buck. His case is particularly urgent in my view as the bitterly cold northeastern China winter is almost upon us and our experience with other detainees in China suggests that his prison cell will be unheated in temperatures that will plunge many degrees below zero in the coming months.

Mr. Chairman, a full year has now passed since the passage of the landmark North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004. Many in the activist community remain, as I am, grateful to you and your colleagues for drafting and unanimously passing this legislation. Yet, I am compelled to be candid at the same time.

As Chairman Leach has stated in his remarks at the beginning that "the implementation of the act by the Administration during the past 12 months has been exceedingly slow, particularly with regard to refugee assistance and resettlement." I completely concur with that assessment, and it has been borne out by my extensive travels related to the refugee work of Helping Hands Korea in the past 12 months which have included trips to China and its surrounding southeastern and northeastern countries. It has caused me to become increasingly troubled. Perhaps a few examples will illustrate my concerns.

During the past summer, just as I was about to depart for China, I was given an update of a most dire situation of a 17-year-old North Korean girl and her sister, who had been hiding in a shelter after wading across the Tumen River. For the teenagers, this had been, in fact, a second hazardous crossing. The first exodus with their parents had taken place, to the best of our knowledge, in late 2004. The girls' father had been an army officer in the military, the DPRK.

Tragically, the entire family of four had been caught as so many refugees are by the Chinese authorities and quickly repatriated. It should come as no surprise that the girls' father upon his return was swiftly and summarily executed for his crime of betrayal of the Father Land, according to the legal code of the DPRK. The army

officer's wife and the daughters' mother was sent to a political prison camp.

In the wake of these extraordinary personal tragedies, the two teen daughters demonstrated amazing resourcefulness and somehow managed to make a furtive second crossing into China. Shortly thereafter, a fellow activist brought their plight to my attention. On the very morning that I was about to leave for China I was told that the younger 14-year-old sister had wandered away from the secret shelter and was picked up by Chinese police.

Thanks to the arrangement of another activist here in the United States, I was able to meet with U.S. Embassy officials in Beijing during that visit. I shared my urgent and grave concerns for the safety and fragile psychological state of the 17-year-old North Korean girl, who had so recently lost her father to a firing squad, her mother to the gulag, and her sister to a Chinese police sweep.

There was no question that there was sympathy in the room among the officials that were in that meeting. I would not deny. I proceeded to ask if there was any way that the U.S. Embassy could help in this extraordinary emergency. Might it be possible, for example, to secretly bring the teen under the protection of the U.S. by slipping her into an Embassy vehicle or even into the trunk?

Then I was startled by the response of one of the political officers of the Embassy. I felt as though he took almost a scolding attitude toward me, cautioning me against what he seemed to perceive as rash activities by North Korean human rights activists.

In response to my pointed request for direct assistance for the psychologically shell-shocked teenager, the political officer replied that there was nothing that could be done by the Embassy except perhaps an inquiry could be made with the Chinese officials as a way to prevent the repatriation of the younger sister. In fact, it was too late for the younger sister.

I was then urged to seek out the assistance of the UNHCR office in Beijing. I thought to myself, is this the State Department's implementation of the North Korean Human Rights Act?

A second example, only 2 months ago I was informed that eight North Korean refugees who had made their way across not only the full breadth of China, but the China/Vietnam border, had been kidnapped, and were being held for ransom in a private house by a corrupt Vietnamese official near the border.

In this difficult and rare case, we activists felt that the lives of the eight were in the balance, so we did our utmost to negotiate a reduced ransom. We were successful and the refugees were released to our co-worker on the ground in Vietnam. I then immediately communicated their predicament to the United States Embassy officials in Seoul, asking if their counterparts in Vietnam could take the eight refugees under their protection to prevent further kidnapping, repeated kidnapping, and extortion.

A message from the U.S. Embassy in Vietnam and the State Department was relayed to me that, no, this would not be possible.

To add insult to injury, because of strained diplomatic relations stemming from the airlift of approximately 480 North Korean refugees from Vietnam to South Korea last year, the South Korean foreign ministry told the United States Embassy official in Seoul that

perhaps the best solution would be for us, we activists, to take the eight refugees to yet another country.

We could hardly believe our ears; that a U.S. Embassy official would relay such a message. In fact, however, that course of action was exactly what we were forced to do. Guide the eight North Koreans across yet another dangerous frontier between Vietnam and Cambodia.

Providence smiled on this operation and another activist and I then traveled to Phnom Penh the next day to rendezvous with the refugees, interview them, and guide them to a South Korean diplomatic mission there, which took them in.

It is difficult for me to adequately express my disappointment in my own Government's failure to act in this emergency.

In a separate case, I learned in June of this year that a North Korean man had made his way to Thailand, an enormous feat in itself. All indications suggested that he belonged to a nascent resistance movement within North Korea. Due to political developments in South Korea that this refugee deemed to be overly submissive to Pyongyang, he hesitated to ask for resettlement in South Korea, worrying for his own personal safety there and the possible impediments to his continued liaison work with fellow resistance members in North Korea.

He specifically requested assistance from activists to obtain entry into the United States. I immediately called a U.S. Embassy official in Seoul, whom I found to be both knowledgeable and helpful in refugee matters in previous months. Outlining this refugee's remarkable situation, I asked the Embassy official if he could coordinate communication with the State Department and his colleagues in Thailand to consider this man's exceptional situation for which the North Korean Human Rights Act seemed particularly well suited.

He did so promptly, but again, the relayed responses from Washington and the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok were both opaque and equivocal. We were not to take him to the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, but instead to the UNHCR in Thailand to determine his status as a refugee and which country would be best suited for his resettlement.

I was assured that if the UNHCR were to recommend his resettlement in the U.S., then the U.S. would be willing to accept him. I agreed with the Embassy official to take him to the UNHCR, but I notified the State Department that there was a high likelihood that this man's movement was being monitored by North Korean agents in Thailand.

Therefore, I requested a non-contact security escort for this North Korean refugee, a fellow activist, and myself as we physically escorted the resistance figure to the UNHCR in Bangkok. I was told that the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok would not provide such security for us as we were not diplomats.

On the day that we took him to the UNHCR office we simply invoked the power of prayer and the time-honored promises of Psalm 91 for our protection. I am happy to report that no untoward incident occurred despite our obvious vulnerability.

What has transpired in the past 4 months was nothing short of a Catch-22 scenario between the UNHCR Bangkok office and the

U.S. Embassy. According to our understanding, the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok never came forward to declare to the UNHCR its willingness to take this refugee.

We subsequently discovered that the UNHCR in Bangkok does not routinely make a determination of the suitability of other possible countries of resettlement for North Korean refugees, but instead simply treats them as de facto South Korean citizens.

Consequently, this brave North Korean refugee fell between the bureaucratic cracks and at one point, to my shocked amazement, ended up on the streets of Bangkok working as an illegal construction worker to make ends meet.

Finally, after months of waiting and flagging hopes, in early October this refugee resigned himself to the stark reality that the State Department would not be willing to invoke the provisions of the North Korean Human Rights Act on his behalf, and contacted the Republic of Korea's Embassy in Bangkok, informing them that he would go to South Korea.

He still awaits processing and remains vulnerable in Thailand. This refugee's story will be explored in a CNN documentary on November 11th that is entitled *Undercover in the Secret State*.

Mr. Chairman, in sharing these actual North Korean refugee emergencies that my NGO has been involved in within recent months, I wish to highlight the fact that in my opinion, the U.S. State Department is seriously out of step with the spirit and the letter of the North Korean Human Rights Act, specifically when one of its intents is to facilitate refugee applications at U.S. diplomatic missions abroad. To my knowledge, not a single North Korean refugee has been assisted in this way in the past 12 months since the act's passage.

This is confirmed by last week's report by the State Department that, as Chairman Leach quoted, "There were no applications for refugee admissions to the U.S. filed by North Koreans."

The explanation for the zero applications, to my mind, is very simple. Based on my own experiences, U.S. Embassies currently discourage such applications being made, discourage activists from bringing North Korean refugees there. Instead, they steer refugees to the UNHCR, which considers them de facto South Korean citizens. This process smacks, in my opinion, of taking the road of least resistance instead of fully implementing the North Korean Human Rights Act.

I have personally outlined all of the above refugee operations in personal meetings with State Department officials in the month of September, that included director-level personnel in the PRM Division, in addition to frequent communications with U.S. Embassy personnel in Seoul, Korea. I have also shared these cases in an NGO meeting with Special Envoy Lefkowitz on his first day in his new position at the State Department.

One final comment if I may is to urge Congress to swiftly pass a long overdue appropriations bill that would help the activist community do a better job of sheltering North Korean refugees and guiding those at particular risk along the so-called underground railroad to safety.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to share these experiences and views.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Peters follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. TIM PETERS, FOUNDER/DIRECTOR, HELPING HANDS
KOREA

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to share my recent experiences relating to North Korean refugees and the extreme difficulties they face in China and surrounding countries. I believe that this hearing is most timely and appreciate your attention to this grave human rights problem. My testimony today will be a brief summary of views that are contained in my prepared statement.

As was the case when I was invited to appear before the International Relations Committee, first in May of 2002, then again in April of 2004, I would like to give prominent place to the fellow activists who have sacrificed so much in rescuing North Korean refugees. In 2002, I highlighted the imprisonment in China of South Korean Pastor Chun Ki Won. Last year, among others, I cited South Korean Choi Young Hoon, who, to this day, remains detained in China for a period that now approaches three years. In my written statement, I will include a fuller listing of all known detained activists and refugees, but I would like to emphasize one case in particular today. This year the arrow of misfortune has struck closer to home. Fellow American, Pastor Phillip Jun Buck, aged 68, was detained in May of this year in his courageous work of sheltering and protecting North Korean refugees. I am mentioning Pastor Buck in part because I have the privilege of knowing him personally and having the honor of being among the supporters of his refugee shelters in recent years. Phillip Buck would sometimes appear unannounced at our weekly Catacomb meetings in Seoul and share uplifting testimonies from his refugee shelters in China. Due to an auto accident during his years as a missionary in Russia, he suffers from sleep disorders that pose particular hardships in prison conditions in China.

I would ask, Mr. Chairman and Committee Members, that just as you exerted such swift and critical influence with the Chinese government that resulted in the release of Chun Ki Won in August of 2002, that you would give equal attention and commitment to the unjust and harsh imprisonment of fellow American Pastor Phillip Jun Buck. His case is particularly urgent as the bitterly cold northeastern China winter is almost upon us and our experience with other detainees suggests that his prison cell will be unheated in temperatures that will plunge many degrees below zero.

Mr. Chairman, a full year has now passed since the passage of the landmark North Korean Human Rights Act. of 2004. Many in the activist community remain, as I am, grateful to you and your colleagues for drafting and unanimously passing this legislation. Yet, I am compelled to be candid, as well. During my extensive travels related to the refugee work of Helping Hands Korea in the past 12 months, which included trips to China and its surrounding southeastern and northeastern countries, I have become increasingly troubled. A few examples, I hope, will illustrate my concerns.

During the summer, just as I was about to depart for China, I was given an update of a most dire situation of a 17-year old North Korean girl and her sister, who had been hiding in a shelter after wading across the Tumen River. For the teenagers, this had been a second hazardous crossing. The first exodus with their parents had taken place, to the best of our knowledge, in late 2004. The girls' father had been an army officer in the military of the DPRK. Tragically, the entire family of four had been caught, as so many refugees are, by the Chinese authorities and quickly repatriated. It should come as no surprise that girls' father, upon his return, was swiftly executed for betrayal of the Fatherland. The army officer's wife was sent to a political prison camp. In the wake of these extraordinary personal tragedies, the two teen daughters demonstrated amazing resourcefulness and somehow managed to make a furtive second crossing into China. Shortly thereafter, a fellow activist brought their plight to my attention. On the very morning that was I was to leave for China, I was told that the younger, 14 year-old sister had wandered away from the shelter where she stayed with her older sister, and was picked up by the Chinese police.

Thanks to the arrangement of another activist here in the US, I was able to meet with US embassy officials in Beijing during that visit. I shared my urgent and grave concerns for the safety and fragile psychological state of the 17 year-old North Korean girl, who had so recently lost her father to a firing squad, her mother to the gulag and her sister to a Chinese police sweep. There was no question that there was sympathy in the room among those that were in the meeting. I proceeded to ask if there was any way that the US embassy could help in this extraordinary

emergency. Might it be possible, for example, to secretly bring the teen under the protection of the US by slipping her into an embassy vehicle? Then I was startled by the response of one of the political officers of the embassy. I felt as though he took on almost a scolding attitude towards me, cautioning me against what he seemed to perceive as rash activities by North Korean human rights activists. In response to my pointed request for direct assistance for the psychologically shell-shocked teenager, the political officer replied that there was nothing that could be done by the embassy, except that an inquiry could be made with Chinese officials as a way to prevent the repatriation of the younger sister. I was then urged to seek out the assistance of the UNHCR office in Beijing. I thought to myself, "Is this the State Department's implementation of the North Korean Human Rights Act?"

A second example: Only two months ago, I was informed that eight North Korean refugees who had made their way across the China-Vietnam border had been kidnapped and were being held for ransom in a private house by a corrupt Vietnamese official near the border. In this difficult and rare case, we activists felt that the lives of the eight were in the balance, so did our utmost to negotiate a reduced ransom. We were successful and the refugees were released to our co-worker on the ground in Vietnam. I then immediately communicated their predicament to US embassy officials in Seoul, asking if their counterparts in Vietnam could take the eight refugees under their protection to prevent further kidnapping and extortion. A message from the US embassy in Vietnam and the State Department was relayed to me that, no, this would not be possible. To add insult to injury, because of strained diplomatic relations stemming from the airlift of about 480 North Korean refugees from Vietnam to South Korea last year, the South Korean Foreign Ministry told the US embassy official in Seoul that perhaps the best solution would be for us to take the eight refugees to yet another country! We could hardly believe our ears that a US embassy official would relay such a message. In fact, however, that course of actions, was exactly what we were forced to do: guide the eight North Koreans across yet another dangerous frontier between Vietnam and Cambodia. Providence smiled on this operation and another activist and I traveled to Phnom Penh the next day to rendezvous with the refugees, interview them and guide them to a South Korean diplomatic mission there, which took them in. It is difficult for me to express my disappointment in my own government's failure to act in this emergency.

In a separate case, I learned in June of this year that a North Korean man had made his way to Thailand. All indications suggested that he belonged to a nascent resistance movement within North Korea. Due to political developments in South Korea that this refugee deemed to be overly submissive to Pyongyang, he hesitated to ask for resettlement in South Korea, worrying for his own personal safety there and the possible impediments to his continued liaison work with fellow resistance members in North Korea. He specifically requested assistance from activists to obtain entry into the United States. I immediately called an US embassy official in Seoul, whom I had found to be both knowledgeable and helpful in refugee matters. Outlining this refugee's remarkable situation, I asked the embassy official if he could coordinate communication with the State Department and his colleagues in Thailand to consider this man's exceptional situation, for which the North Korean Human Rights Act seemed particularly well-suited. He did so promptly. But again, the relayed responses from Washington and the US embassy in Bangkok were both opaque and equivocal. We were urged NOT to take him to the US embassy in Bangkok, but instead to the UNHCR office in Thailand to determine his status as a refugee and which country would be best suited for his resettlement. I was assured that if the UNHCR were to recommend his resettlement in the US, then the US would be willing to accept him. I agreed to take him to UNHCR, but I notified the State Dept. that there was a high likelihood that this man's movements were being monitored by North Korean agents in Thailand. Therefore, I requested a non-contact security escort for this North Korean refugee, a fellow activist and myself, as we physically escorted this resistance figure to the UNHCR office in Bangkok. I was told that the US embassy in Bangkok would not provide such security for us as we were not diplomats. On the day we took him to the UNHCR office, we simply invoked the power of prayer and the time-honored promises of Psalm 91 for our protection. I'm happy to report that no untoward incident occurred despite our obvious vulnerability.

What has transpired in the past four months was nothing short of a Catch-22 scenario between the UNHCR Bangkok office and the US embassy.

According to our understanding, the US embassy in Bangkok never came forward to declare to the UNHCR its willingness to take this refugee. We subsequently discovered that the UNHCR in Bangkok does not routinely make a determination of the suitability of other possible countries of resettlement for the North Korean refugees, but instead, simply treats them as de facto South Korean citizens. Con-

sequently, this brave North Korean refugee, fell between the bureaucratic cracks and, at one point, ended up on the streets of Bangkok, working as an illegal construction worker to make ends meet. Finally, after months of waiting and flagging hopes, in early October this refugee resigned himself to the stark reality that the State Department would not be willing to invoke the provisions of the North Korean Human Rights Act on his behalf, and contacted the Republic of Korea's embassy in Bangkok that he would go to South Korea. He still awaits processing and remains vulnerable in Thailand. This refugee's story will be explored in a CNN documentary on Nov. 11th, "Undercover in the Secret State."

Mr. Chairman, I apologize for going over my time limit. In sharing these actual North Korean refugee emergencies that my NGO has been involved in within recent months, I wish to highlight the fact that, in my opinion, the US State Department is seriously out of step with the spirit and the letter of the North Korean Human Rights Act, specifically when one of its intents is to facilitate refugee applications at US diplomatic missions abroad. To my knowledge, not a single North Korean refugee has been assisted in this way in the past 12 months since the Act's passage. I have personally outlined all of the above refugee operations in personal meetings with State Department officials that included director-level personnel in the PRM division in addition to frequent communication with US embassy personnel in Seoul, Korea. I have also shared these cases in an NGO meeting with Special Envoy Lefkowitz on his first day in his new position at the State Department.

One final comment, if I may, is to urge Congress to swiftly pass a long-overdue appropriations bill that would help the activist community do a better job of sheltering North Korean refugees and guiding those at particular risk along the so-called "underground railroad" to safety.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to share these experiences and views.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Peters, thank you very much; your testimony is obviously very troubling, and it is meant to be, and I thank you for your candor.

We, as I indicated in the opening, sought to get the U.S. State Department to send a high-level witness to this joint hearing. We will continue that. We expect perhaps as early as next week to have a closed briefing with the State Department, and I will give you my word to raise the issues you have raised in a very, very aggressive way because I, too, am concerned that this very laudable piece of legislation goes largely unimplemented, and the reason why we did it was not to make a statement, but to effectuate a policy that would make a difference.

I will also talk to Jay Lefkowitz about the cases you have raised. I am glad you did raise them with him. When he worked at the White House as Special Advisor to the President for Domestic Policy, I found him to be very responsive, so I hope that he would be equally responsive on these cases you have raised. And that goes for people in the field too.

The U.S. Department of State and the people we are operating in our missions abroad need to follow both the spirit and the letter of the law, and so I think you have raised some very powerful cases we need to follow up on.

As well, I am very glad you brought up the case of Pastor Phillip Jun Buck. We will follow up in that, as well, as aggressively as we possibly can. And again, your testimony is very, very timely, and I am sure both of our Subcommittees will be joined by Chairman Hyde and Tom Lantos, the Ranking Democrat, in these endeavors as well.

So this hearing will be a launching pad for more aggressive implementation, and maybe implementation in the first place of these important legislation.

[Applause.]

Mr. PETERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

Mr. SMITH. We needed this information. You provided it. All of our witnesses have done so, and I just would ask a very few questions because your testimonies, I think, were very, very comprehensive. If I could, to Mrs. Ma and Mr. Cha: Just an informational question if you would. What were your impressions of the United States while living in North Korea? And as briefly as you could, how have they changed since leaving North Korea? Did you know that you could apply to the United States as a refugee? Is that something that you knew of? And bottom line for all of you, what can we be doing further to help the people of North Korea? Obviously, implementing the law seems to be the first order of the day.

Mr. Peters, I think you have made a very, very persuasive case on that.

And if I could, to you, Mr. Kim, if you would, what kind of obstacles do you face by the Government of South Korea in your broadcasting, and is there any fear of retaliation for your operation, having testified here in Washington?

The INTERPRETER. The response comes from Mrs. Ma.

Mrs. MA [through interpreter]. While I was in North Korea, I knew of the United States, but what I knew of the U.S. was all about the bad things. We were totally educated in anti-American system, so this imperial America and imperial U.S. was a bad country as far as I was concerned. But that thought had changed once I had gotten to China, and the change continued on once I had gotten to South Korea.

In July of this year, I had a chance to come to the U.S. and I came to love the country now, and I realize that it is a free, loving, democratic society.

And as far as the refugee status is concerned, I did not know that I could actually apply for a refugee status and come into the U.S.

And as to your third question, sir, U.S. is a very powerful country economically, politically, and otherwise, and I hope you will continue to work for the human rights of the people of North Korea, and I hope you will find a way to change the dictatorship, the dictator regime of the North Korea.

The INTERPRETER. The question now goes to Mrs. Cha.

Mrs. CHA [through interpreter]. When I was younger living in North Korea, I had been educated and I have learned about the United States and everything that I had learned about the U.S. was that it is an imperial regime that is an enemy of the country, and that we were supposed to somehow fight and win over this imperial country.

It was an enemy to us, and for about 8 years I was in the military of North Korea, and as a combatant the first thing that we had to yell out whenever we were in training was, "We will bust the American imperialists." So that is how I had felt, and knew about the U.S., and this was something that was incorporated in our minds through repetition.

However, in July of this year, I had a chance to come to the U.S. and I had a chance to come face to face with Americans, and I had realized then that these are the same people. They have feelings. They are able to sympathize with us in our stories, and they are able to shed tears with us and on our behalf, and I really think

America is a great country. This is a beautiful country, and I think Americans are good, not our enemies.

And also I realize that there is a lot of Americans who are activists who are freedom-loving people and who are fighting for the democracy of North Korea, and that is all great.

As to your second question, sir, I did not realize that I could apply as a refugee and come to the U.S., but I would think because I do not speak English being in the U.S. may be a little bit hard for me to live.

As to your third question, sir, right now the South Korean Government is supporting North Korea. They are sending a lot of economic help to North Korea, and a lot of this help going to North Korea actually do not reach the people of North Korea. I would say less than 30 percent of whatever help is being sent over to North Korea are actually reaching the people of North Korea. And so this support is help that the South Korean Government is giving to North Korea, perhaps it would be better used if they were to direct such support, even if it is going to be just 50 percent of the current level, to the people of the refugees, escapees from North Korea.

Now, the people in South Korea who have escaped from North Korea, we would be able to certainly economically benefit for this support, and once we have all the support from the South Korean Government, we would be able to help the people of North Korea, our brothers and sisters and other family members. This would indirectly help the people of North Korea, and also this good news will travel very fast to the people of North Korea, more people would be coming out from North Korea to South Korea.

And also, by helping our families in North Korea, they would be in turn able to help the neighbors of the people in their community, so perhaps this is something that the United States Congress would be able to address some time in the future.

The INTERPRETER. And the question remains to Mr. Kim, sir.

Mr. KIM. The South Korean Government does not have any direct obstacles that they put before us, so they do not really stop us from what we try to do. In fact, they have police stationed right outside of our station 24 hours a day. Of course, they say that they are trying to protect us and that it is for the security purposes, but I really think they are monitoring our activities.

And Kim Jong Il had at one point given his mandate saying that we should utilize third parties to stop these radio broadcastings. I think what the South Korean Government is doing is precisely what is mandated by Kim Jong Il.

And as to the retaliation from the South Korean Government, well, this is my very second time speaking and testifying on the Hill, and I do so because I believe what I am speaking of is the truth, and it needs to be heard by people. And if the South Korean Government were to retaliate for whatever I say on the Hill, I will not be sitting still. I will be doing something about it. Perhaps that is why nothing has happened to me so far. So the South Korean Government has not retaliated in any way against me.

Earlier today during the lunch hour, Ambassador Han Sung Ryul from North Korea was across from us, and at the time I told him that if you are truly fighting, or if you are truly working for the

peace on Korean Peninsula, you know that Kim Jong Il has to be removed, and that is what I had yelled out.

And at that time he responded, snapped back at me, telling me, "Do you want to die?" And those were his precise words.

Now, this is happening in the middle of the U.S. This Congress right here that we are sitting at. Do we have to hear words like that here in the U.S. Congress?

I know the South Korean Government is very careful not to anger or irritate Kim Jong Il because the same thing happened here in the United States, does the—is the U.S. Government always very careful not to anger or irate the dictator? I hope not and I hope that that is the truth.

Mr. LEACH. We have had a long day, but let me say that great circumstances can seldom be understood without reference to small stories, and the stories that have been told today are very profound and reveal a great deal about the plight of the North Korean people as well as North Koreans in refugee status, and we are hopeful to change the circumstance of our relations with North Korea, and make a more progressive society in North Korea.

We are also hopeful of changing the circumstance of North Koreans as refugees, and in this regard the North Korean Human Rights Act is the law of the United States of America, and sometimes the Executive has differences of policy with the Congress, and the Executive has a great deal of discretion.

But when it comes to the law of the United States, the Executive is obligated to follow it, and the best that can be said at this moment in time is that there is a reluctance to uphold the decision of statute. The worst that can be said is that it is a dereliction of duty, and we have an obligation to assert to the Executive that a more proactive position has to be taken.

In any regard, I want to thank each of our witnesses. I want to thank you, Mr. Peters, for your perspective as an outside advocate. This is one of the great dilemmas of modern times, and people cannot be ignored when humanity turns its back on them, and that is the obligation of Congress to make clear.

Anyway, I want to thank each of you for coming very long distances and speaking stories of the heart. They are very moving. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Chairman Leach, thank you very much, and let me reiterate how grateful we are to you, and I know all of you know this, but Congressman Leach is the prime sponsor of the North Korean Human Rights Act, and he led very persuasively, I mean, he got both the House and the Senate to enact it, got it signed by the President. I was very proud to be one of his supporters, so I want to publicly thank him again for his extraordinary leadership on this legislation.

And as we now go about trying to ensure that it is implemented, our witnesses have really provided us with a tremendous amount of information, and also there are so many issues that seek to grab the attention of Members of Congress. You have reinvigorated our efforts.

And I want to thank you for that as well, and we will get, Mr. Peters, to the bottom of many of the questions you have raised, and we will do so, I believe, tenaciously, so I want to thank you.

And, Mr. Kim, we will be following that threat that was made against your life, and that is how I see it. "Do you want to die?" is certainly not a benign statement on the part of a diplomat from North Korea. We will follow that, and raise that as well. I think that is an outrageous statement that has been made against you.

I want to thank our witnesses, and unless you have anything else to add; Mr. Peters, you are writing; do you have something you would like to say?

Mr. PETERS. Just for the record, I would like to submit these. They are the treks of Mrs. Ma and Mr. Cha, both of them, and without objection if we could reduce that, put that into the record to show the very long trek that you made to freedom.

[The information referred to was too large to be reprinted here.]

Mr. PETERS. I would only add, Mr. Chairman, that as extraordinary as these treks are, in another respect they are not exceptional. We are running into refugee stories that literally boggle the mind, refugees that travel incredible distances through jungles, through deserts, through every possible terrain, kidnapping, et cetera, and yet the human spirit and the quest for freedom stirs them to do almost the unbelievable.

So we thank you for your support and thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Mr. SMITH. On that eloquent note, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 5:57 p.m., the Subcommittees were adjourned.]

