

Congressional Testimony of Greg Scarlatoiu
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“North Korea: Denuclearization Talks and Human Rights”
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Congressman Randy Hultgren, Congressman Jim McGovern, distinguished members of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, I wish to begin by thanking you for inviting me to testify before you today. For several months now, through the summit diplomacy initiated by the Trump Administration and the Moon Jae-in Government in the Republic of Korea, we have witnessed movement on Korean peninsula issues. The challenge will be to channel that movement. We all want reconciliation, peace, security, freedom, democracy, development, prosperity, and unification for all Korean people. The ultimate measure of inter-Korean reconciliation and eventual unification will be the impact it has on Korean people living in the south and in the north. Human rights have often been sacrificed on the altar of the North Korean political, military, and security challenges. But human rights must be addressed. If diplomatic approaches to North Korea that have discounted human rights have not worked for three decades, why not include human rights in the equation for a change?

During the time of the “maximum pressure campaign,” the Trump Administration effectively applied the economic element of national power, through the strengthening of the economic sanctions regime aimed to prevent the development and proliferation of North Korean nuclear weapons and missiles and to punish those officials responsible for that development and proliferation by severing their access to sources of funding and luxury goods imported from the outside world. This sanctions regime is grounded in 21 UN Security Council Resolutions and the US North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enforcement Act of 2016. The administration effectively applied the military element of national power, by deploying assets to the region and underlining unwavering American commitment to key allies Republic of Korea and Japan. Despite media frenzy and Korea watcher-driven panic at the height of such efforts, these were not measures aimed to start a second Korean War, but to prevent it. Human rights also became part of the maximum pressure campaign. The UN Secretary General noted that human rights pressure worked to get North Korea to take certain steps, in particular on the rights of people with disabilities.

Since the Pyongchang Winter Olympic Games hosted by the Republic of Korea, the Trump Administration has been testing the diplomatic element of national power, by employing a tool never used before, summit diplomacy. North Korea has released three American hostages, handed over 55 sets of remains of US servicemen, blew up the entrances to tunnels at the Pungyeri nuclear facility, and destroyed a ballistic missile test facility. At the recent September 9 national day parade in Pyongyang, North Korea did not display ballistic missiles, as it had done on previous occasions.

As a student and occasional practitioner of diplomacy, I will never argue against diplomacy. North Korea diplomacy must never stop, diplomacy grounded in a firm understanding of the

nature of North Korea's regime and its strategic objectives. The question will remain as to whether the Kim regime can be trusted, whether the North Korean leader is truly looking to chart a new path for his country, or whether this is déjà vu, a North Korean "charm offensive" and deception campaign.

North Korea has breached just about each and every international obligation it has had. It joined the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1985 just to pull out of the NPT and develop its plutonium-based nuclear program. It joined the Geneva Agreed Framework of 1994 just to breach its terms by developing a clandestine uranium enrichment-based nuclear weapons program. North Korea's failure to comply doomed the Six Party Talks. And North Korea announced a "satellite" launch just two and a half weeks after the February 2012 "Leap Day Agreement. North Korea is in violation of just about each and every provision of each and every international human rights instrument it has acceded to, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, although it has reportedly made modest progress in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and has taken some steps in its laws on women.

The track record indicates that North Korea's diplomatic credibility is low. However, North Korea's willingness to agree to the resolution of key human rights issues arising from its international obligations may provide the litmus test of whether it is truly ready and willing to proceed with steps toward final, fully verified denuclearization. Concrete steps such as granting humanitarian access to its vast system of unlawful imprisonment and its eventual closure and relocation of prisoners, or allowing unrestricted reunions of separated families constitute critical components of that litmus test.

The year 2018 exemplifies the human rights and security paradox the world faces with the North Korean regime.¹ This year not only marks the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (10 December) but also the 70th anniversary of the founding of North Korea (9 September). The UDHR "for the first time in human history spell[ed] out basic civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all human beings should enjoy."²

In contrast, North Korea was founded 70 years ago on communist totalitarian principles and ideology, which we know to be generally contrary to what now are considered universal human rights enshrined in the UDHR. In fact, North Korea fundamentally denies these basic and universal human rights, despite being a signatory to core international human rights treaties. Former United Nations Commission of Inquiry Chair, The Honorable Michael Kirby, stated:

¹ The Honorable Michael Kirby AC CMG, in the inaugural Fred Iklé Memorial Lecture, February 19, 2016, outlined 10 paradoxical strategies for dealing with North Korean human rights and security issues. See The Hon. Michael Kirby, "Security and Human Rights in North Korea – and the Power of Paradoxical Thinking," *HRNK Insider* (blog), March 23, 2016, <https://www.hrnkinsider.org/2016/03/security-and-human-rights-in-north.html>.

² OHCHR, *International Human Rights Law*, <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/internationallaw.aspx>.

“Peace and security [are] reinforced by universal human rights and the rule of law: both at home and in the international sphere. Without these reinforcements of stability, predictability, and mutual respect, security would be an illusory pipedream. The human mind had to struggle to retain paradoxical thoughts together at the one time.”³

It is with this 70th anniversary of two consequential but divergent ideologies in mind—(1) a universal ideal that now strengthens the rule of law and democratic principles, and (2) a totalitarian state found to be committing crimes against humanity—that I wish to outline *why human rights are strategic for a deal on the Korean peninsula*.

To begin, we must remind ourselves about the *Kim regime’s perspective on human rights* because it is in sharp contrast to the UDHR and American values-based human rights policies. From North Korea’s standpoint, human rights are not inherent in individuals but are granted by the Kim regime.

In 2014, the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the DPRK found that “systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations” perpetrated against the people of North Korea, pursuant to policies established at the highest level of the state, amount to crimes against humanity in many instances. Crimes include murder, enslavement, deliberate starvation, rape, forced abortions and other sexual violence, torture, and enforced disappearances, among other hardships.

1. In what ways do human rights add clear and achievable benchmarks that add credibility to a larger agreement?

[I]mproving North Korea’s human rights record should be the litmus test of North Korea’s credibility to engage on other issues. After all, if a government has no regard for the lives of its own people, what regard does it have for the lives of others? What deters it from provoking a war, or proliferating missile technology and weapons of mass destruction to terrorists?⁴

While a human rights policy cannot take priority over every other interest, consistently employing human rights in diplomacy allows the United States a way to promote its values and determine which countries are favorable to improving their own human rights situation if it means a stronger, more advantageous relationship with the United States. Typically, this has meant enhanced aid or greater security cooperation in exchange for certain human rights concessions.

³ The Honorable Michael Kirby AC CMG, in the inaugural Fred Iklé Memorial Lecture, February 19, 2016, outlined 10 paradoxical strategies for dealing with North Korean human rights and security issues. See The Hon. Michael Kirby, “Security and Human Rights in North Korea – and the Power of Paradoxical Thinking,” *HRNK Insider* (blog), March 23, 2016, <https://www.hrnkinsider.org/2016/03/security-and-human-rights-in-north.html>.

⁴ Daniel Aum, Greg Scarlatoiu, & Amanda Mortwedt Oh, *Crimes against Humanity in North Korea: The Case for U.S. Leadership and Action*, 4-5, Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights (November 2014), available at <https://www.icasinc.org/2014/2014I/2014Iidxa.pdf>.

Under the Carter Administration, the release of political prisoners was viewed as an indicator of a country's efforts to improve human rights as part of a good faith effort to improve relations with the United States. While the fundamental motivation for actually improving human rights was sometimes based on other interests, the end state was still a positive development for human rights. A 1977 CIA memorandum entitled "Impact of the US Stand on Human Rights" outlined political prisoner releases in Paraguay, Peru, Mexico, and Togo as a result of U.S. human rights pressure in foreign policy discussions with those countries.⁵

In the case of North Korea, human rights can be an indicator of good faith and add clear and achievable benchmarks that increase credibility as part of a larger agreement. For instance, the release of political prisoners could indicate the regime's willingness to reform or at least make a political gesture to improve its relationship with the United States. Although North Korea released three American detainees earlier this year, it still holds an estimated 80,000-120,000 political prisoners inside its gulags, whose existence it denies. Were the regime to provide amnesty to *political* prisoners—it plans to release select prisoners for the 70th anniversary of its founding on September 9, 2018, but not political prisoners—this would be significant in that it may (1) implicitly acknowledge political prisons (*kwan-li-so*); (2) highlight a shift in policies of power and control, perhaps, by the Kim regime; and (3) serve as an indicator that the regime was either more confident in its abilities to suppress resistance or that internal resistance was less of a threat.

Similarly, North Korea could release the locations of its detention facilities to allow for further monitoring of these sites as well as grant access to the International Committee of the Red Cross or UN agencies working in the field to provide humanitarian assistance to North Korea's most vulnerable, which should include prisoners.⁶ HRNK currently monitors the locations of prisons it either has confirmed or suspects of being a detention facility holding political prisoners.

Additionally, the regime could allow more access to outside information, also highlighting a willingness to reform and respect fundamental human rights. The regime, for example, could allow select television channels or shows to be broadcast and received into North Korea without severely penalizing North Korean audiences. In conjunction, the DPRK Criminal Code could be revised (*de jure* and *de facto*) to no longer prohibit listening to "hostile" broadcasting, for example.⁷

The regime could also decouple or slow relations with regimes hostile to the United States engaged in severe human rights abuses and international terrorism, such as Syria and Iran, and/or known to be the worst human rights violators in the world, such as Syria. This would signal that the Kim regime was more focused on its relationship with the United States and, perhaps, on its own people rather than economic and trade activities with fellow perpetrators.

⁵ Memorandum: "Impact of the US Stand on Human Rights," CIA Directorate of Intelligence, 1977, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp80r01362a000200100001-6>.

⁶ Roberta Cohen, "UN Humanitarian Actors and North Korea's Prison Camps," *International Journal of Korean Studies* XIX: 1 (2017), 1-4.

⁷ Article 185 of the 2012 DPRK Criminal Code. See David Hawk with Amanda Mortwedt Oh, "The Parallel Gulag: North Korea's 'An-jeon-bu' Prison Camps," 108, (Washington, DC: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2017), https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/Hawk_The_Parallel_Gulag_Web.pdf.

Larger or more numerous markets could be established to allow people the ability to sell and purchase goods and food for personal consumption. Under Kim Jong-un, reports that the *jangmadang* have grown are fairly well known. Satellite imagery, for example, could help show the existence of these markets, which now substitute for the once towering Public Distribution System.

These informal markets represent a catch-22 for the government. While weakening the regime's control over its people, they provide alternative sources of food and other goods that the regime knows it cannot shut down. The regime has previously tried to replace these markets through minor economic measures—such as increasing individual farming plots, currency reform, or even forcible shutdowns—but these were unsuccessful. Though high levels of starvation and malnourishment persist, access to food has reportedly improved overall thanks to the informal market system.⁸

While these are merely suggestions, the response by the Kim regime could be measured and therefore serve as indicators or even benchmarks to add credibility to any larger agreement between the United States and North Korea.

2. What are the key human rights issues that should be included?

Several key human rights issues should be included as part of a strategy that incorporates human rights issues into larger discussions with North Korea. As mentioned, human rights improvements can serve as benchmarks for broader security negotiations with the Kim regime.

A. *Songbun* (social classification system). Most of North Korea's human rights violations stem from its *songbun* system, which is North Korea's discriminatory social classification system. Based on perceived loyalty to the *Suryong* (Supreme Leader),⁹ *songbun* ensures all North Koreans are identified, classified, and controlled throughout their lives and determines the (denial of) opportunities they have as North Korean citizens.¹⁰ The Kim

⁸ Dan Aum and Michelle Cho, "The Narrow Path: Pursuing Human Rights and National Security Objectives in North Korea," *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, 2, July 17, 2018, <http://www.nbr.org/research/activity.aspx?id=883>.

⁹ See Robert Collins, *Marked For Life: Songbun, North Korea's Social Classification System*, 90-91 (Washington, DC: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2012), https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/HRNK_Songbun_Web.pdf.

¹⁰ See Robert Collins, "Pyongyang Republic: North Korea's Capital of Human Rights Denial," (Washington, DC: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2016), https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/Collins_PyongyangRepublic_FINAL_WEB.pdf. *Pyongyang Republic* analyzes the Kim Family Regime's concept of its "*Suryong*" (Supreme Leader) based system, critical to which is the recruitment, control, and development of a core class of elite North Koreans loyal to the regime. To adhere to the *suryong* doctrine, one must sacrifice himself completely to the service of the *Suryong* and accept a common destiny that is led in totality by the supreme leader. The report examines the reality of North Korea's purposefully constructed disparity between Pyongyang's elites and ordinary citizens in the provinces, which promotes the common conviction that there are two republics within North Korea's borders—the "Pyongyang Republic" and the "Republic of Provinces. This report is a unique look into the lives, privileges, and power among North Korean power elites inside the "Pyongyang Republic" and an important resource for understanding North Korea's politics, economy, and society.

regime's use of *songbun* suppresses human rights and basic freedoms from birth, such as the ability to choose a school, occupation, place to live, where to travel, and even a partner. In essence, control and human rights denial begin and end with *songbun*, as the vast majority of North Koreans are unable to escape this social marking for their entire lives. Any promise of change or abolishment of the *songbun* system would be an immeasurable step toward improving the lives of millions of North Koreans.

B. Political prisoners and gulags. The most pressing human rights concern is North Korea's system of political imprisonment, manifested in modern-day gulags. In February 2014, the United Nations Commission of Inquiry (UN COI) found North Korea's political prison camps to be places where the most egregious crimes against humanity are being committed. Moreover, research by HRNK and other human rights organizations indicates that political prisoners are detained at other types of facilities as well, including North Korea's re-education through forced labor camps (*kyo-hwa-so*). The UN COI called on North Korea to provide its citizens with basic human rights and acknowledge the existence of the political prison camps. As mentioned, the regime should provide locations of its political prisons and an account of its political prisoners. Kim Jong-un should release political prisoners and their families as proof of good faith and intent to reform.

C. "Modern-day slavery."¹¹ A 2018 Global Slavery Index study found that North Korea has an estimated 2,640,000 million people living in modern slavery, making North Korea the country with the highest prevalence of modern-day slavery in the world.¹² North Korea's use of detention facilities to control political dissent and of forced labor to ultimately generate hard currency for the regime is a prime example of modern-day slavery for many North Koreans.

North Korea officially dispatches about 100,000 workers to over 30 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East.¹³ The Kim Family Regime confiscates much of the USD 200 million earned by these workers annually. Despite the known exploitation and hardship, North Koreans continue to covet these positions, which provide rare opportunities to spend time outside the world's most isolated dictatorial regime and send small amounts of money to their families at home. Only those deemed loyal to the regime as measured by North Korea's *songbun* loyalty-based social classification system have access to these jobs. Even those with "good *songbun*" frequently bribe government officials to secure one of the few positions available. Once overseas, workers labor under harsh and dangerous conditions that border on slavery. North Korea's pervasive security apparatus continues to survey all activities while spouses and children practically serve as hostages to prevent defections.

¹¹ Forced labor and modern-day slavery may be viewed as a subset of human trafficking.

¹² The Global Slavery Index, "Korea, Democratic People's Republic of," Walk Free Foundation, 2018, <https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/2018/data/country-data/north-korea/>.

¹³ U.S. Department of State, "Democratic People's Republic of Korea 2017 Human Rights Report," Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, March 2018, 25, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277333.pdf>.

Despite the DPRK's being a party to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), children are also exploited to generate the resources needed to maintain the regime in power. They are reportedly forced to participate in public mobilization campaigns and perform forced labor ranging from road cleaning to railway construction. Just a few days ago, tens of thousands of school children participated in North Korea's Arirang Mass Games, held after a five-year hiatus to observe the 70th anniversary of the founding of the DPRK. Young performers are taken out of school for months and forced to practice while often not being given food or even water, or being allowed enough time to rest.

Human trafficking can also be understood as a part of modern-day slavery. North Korea's (and China's) practice of detaining North Korean escapees and forcibly repatriating them to North Korea, where they face torture and, at times, death in detention is abhorrent and compelling and it amounts to an egregious violation of the non-refoulement provisions in the UN Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. As North Koreans attempt to escape their dire circumstances, they often are repatriated by China or punished by North Korea.

According to statistics by the Republic of Korea's Ministry of Unification (MOU), the number of [North Korean] female refugees in the first half of 2018 amounted to just 430 in comparison to 58 male refugees.¹⁴ 87% are [North Korean] women so far this year, representing the highest percentage of female [North Korean] refugees arriving in the Republic of Korea since 1998 (as far as the MOU's data show). These statistics for the first half of 2018 also represent a projected decline in the number of North Koreans able to escape their country and find refuge in the Republic of Korea. These numbers may be the lowest since Kim Jong-un took power (end of 2011). 2012 to 2017 also showed a marked decrease in North Koreans arriving in the ROK, often attributed to Kim Jong-un's policies and practices along the Sino-NK border (in addition to China's increased security measures as well).¹⁵

Human trafficking in and around North Korea points to fundamental issues regarding freedom of movement, the right to food, and violence against women. Put another way, simply, if North Korea allowed its people the opportunity to freely travel, trade, and encouraged women's rights and equality, fewer women and girls would fall prey to trafficking. Many women and children fleeing North Korea are trafficked in China, and China does not view these women and children as refugees entitled to seek asylum. Instead, China, in collaboration with North Korea, actively targets these women and children in an effort to send them back to North Korea, likely to appease the Kim regime, prevent any implosion, and ensure greater stability along the Sino-North Korea border. Regardless, these victims should be allowed by China to apply for asylum.

¹⁴ For statistics, see ROK Ministry of Unification, "Policy on North Korean Defectors," https://www.unikorea.go.kr/eng_unikorea/relations/statistics/defectors/.

¹⁵ United Nations Commission on the Status of Women Submission, Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, August 1, 2018, *publication forthcoming*.

“While the United States Refugee Admissions Program remains the largest in the world, some 220 refugees from North Korea have resettled since the enactment of the North Korea Human Rights Act of 2004.”¹⁶ Should talks between North Korea and the United States continue, the issue of human trafficking must be discussed. In the spirit of *The Jackson-Vanik Amendment*, the United States should demand that North Koreans be allowed to travel freely and emigrate.

D. Separated Families. “There are 100,000 Korean Americans in the United States with possible family ties in North Korea who are seeking reunions.”¹⁷ For many Koreans, the possibility of reuniting with family members is a distant wish, as many struggle to outlive North Korea’s cruel policy of separation. However, if North Korea allowed continuous, sustainable, unsupervised family reunions there would be a possibility that this wish could become reality. North Korea, if nothing else, could allow its citizens to travel to third countries for reunions, even to China, as part of a human rights benchmark and indicator of good faith in negotiations.

3. Are there examples from past negotiations with North Korea that are relevant to this?

For almost three decades, human rights have not been regarded as a priority in negotiations with North Korea. Neglecting human rights concerns as a “reward” for North Korea’s returning to the negotiating table should no longer be an option. Past negotiations provide some examples relevant to our situation today where discussions over sensitive strategic and nuclear issues with other governments have not precluded reference to human rights concerns. Most notably in the case of the former Soviet Union, the United States raised human rights issues in bilateral discussions and multilateral processes such as the Helsinki Process while negotiations were also underway on nuclear issues. Contemporary discussions with China and other countries have also included human rights. Building on such precedents, negotiations with North Korea could include a human rights component.¹⁸

Arguably and to varying degrees, prior administrations acceded their position on human rights to North Korea by pursuing denuclearization and human rights objectives on separate tracks and then never resolving the intractable problem of denuclearization. However, despite repeatedly rejecting criticism about its human rights record as US propaganda, Pyongyang recognizes that it can reap gains by agreeing to some, even if not all, demands. The release of American prisoners and ongoing negotiations on the POW/MIA issue are only recent examples.¹⁹ North Korea would not have come to the

¹⁶ Statement of Greg Scarlatoiu, <https://www.hrnk.org/events/congressional-hearings-view.php?id=12>.

¹⁷ Dan Aum and Michelle Cho, “The Narrow Path: Pursuing Human Rights and National Security Objectives in North Korea,” *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, 5, July 17, 2018, <http://www.nbr.org/research/activity.aspx?id=883>.

¹⁸ Daniel Aum, Greg Scarlatoiu, & Amanda Mortwedt Oh, *Crimes against Humanity in North Korea: The Case for U.S. Leadership and Action*, 23, Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights (November 2014), available at <https://www.icasinc.org/2014/2014I/2014Iidxa.pdf>.

¹⁹ Dan Aum and Michelle Cho, “The Narrow Path: Pursuing Human Rights and National Security Objectives in North Korea,” *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, 2, July 17, 2018, <http://www.nbr.org/research/activity.aspx?id=883>.

negotiating table with the Trump administration if it did not have a clear way to profit or benefit from talks with the United States and South Korea.

4. Is there an example from history where the US has incorporated human rights into a security deal, and what are the lessons that can be applied here?

Two examples where human rights have been a part of U.S. foreign policy in the past may provide a worthy precedent. They were part of multilateral and bilateral talks with the USSR.

A. A Multilateral Approach: Helsinki Process (Basket III)

The Helsinki Accords, or Helsinki Final Act, was the final document produced following the close of the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe. The main purpose of the Accords was to reduce existing tensions between the Western and Soviet blocs, primarily by ensuring mutual acceptance of the new world order following the end of World War II. The agreement, signed by the United States, Canada, and 35 European nations, recognized new national borders in Europe and adopted ten major point of diplomacy, including agreement to respect and secure human rights.

The Accords were “a multilateral approach to political, economic and human rights issues in Europe ”as well as to collective security; this dual security approach was seen as significant to reducing Cold War tensions and improving co-operation between Western and Eastern Europe. Critics of the Accords claimed the agreement legitimized the Soviet Union’s annexation of the Baltic States while simultaneously allowing it to ignore the human rights provisions laid out in the agreement . However, the Accords were published in each country that was a signatory, and were seen as a catalyst for the sweeping political changes, dissident movements, and calls for increased human rights that took place in Eastern Europe a decade later .

Given what ultimately took place in Eastern Europe a decade after the Helsinki Accords were signed, as well as the OSCE’s continuing work on human rights, North Korea might view a Helsinki Process as a strategy for regime change. But the intent here would be setting up a vehicle for discussion about a range of subjects rather than limiting talks with North Korea to denuclearization.

Congress could follow the Helsinki process model from the Cold War negotiations with the Soviet Union and analyze what could be applied. A large group of objectives could be divided into smaller sub-categories, and then Congress could begin holding hearings and making plans regarding these sub-categories based on committee jurisdiction. This framework could be established “early in the process” so Congress can have reasonable expectations for what is to occur.”²⁰

Certainly, the downside of a Helsinki Process-type approach to North Korea is that North Korea could exploit and abuse Helsinki Process-type diplomatic interaction to pay only lip service to its human rights obligations while gaining *de facto* and perhaps *de jure*

²⁰ “Trump-Kim Summit: Outcomes and Oversight,” Statement by Michael Green, June 20, 2018, <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/hearing/subcommittee-hearing-the-trump-kim-summit-outcomes-and-oversight/>.

recognition as a nuclear power. Naturally, under such circumstances, failure to comply with human rights obligations would, again, provide a litmus test of North Korea's commitment to resolving its security conundrum.

B. Bilateral approaches to getting the Soviet Union to protect its Jewish citizens as a sign of good faith applicable to negotiating security issues.

In addition to a multilateral setting, the United States has put forward human rights issues bilaterally while negotiating nuclear agreements with the USSR. Both the Carter and the Reagan administrations rejected and disproved the argument that raising human rights concerns could risk good U.S.-Soviet relations and arms control. Jewish emigration was featured in the Carter Administration: the signing of the SALT II agreement in 1979 coincided with the highest rate of Jewish emigration ever allowed – 51,320 and the resolution of many family reunification cases.²¹

Secretary of State George Shultz, serving the Reagan administration for six and a half years, was the leading advocate of the Soviet Jewry movement in Washington DC. While in office, Shultz pushed for an increase in the quota for Soviet Jewish immigrants, suggested an increase in the number of staffs in the US Embassy in Moscow, and challenged the Department of Justice's removal of presumption of persecution.²²

President Reagan and George Shultz's interest in the plight of Soviet Jewry was tremendous and was "close to the first issue on the American agenda," according to the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.²³ President Reagan had assured the Prime Minister Shamir that "the plight of Soviet Jewry shall remain at the top of my agenda in my discussions with Secretary Gorbachev."²⁴ At the time, special working groups on human rights and humanitarian issues were formed within the Reagan administration. As diplomatic interaction with North Korea continues, the Reagan-Shultz approach to human rights in the Soviet Union and the refusenik issue in particular could provide a worthy precedent and serve as the litmus test of North Korean commitment to a negotiated settlement of security issues.

Thank you.

END.

²¹ Cohen, Roberta. "Human Rights Diplomacy in the Communist Heartland," in *The Diplomacy of Human Rights*, Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, ed. David Newsom, 1986, p176.

²² Altshuler, Stuart. *From Exodus to Freedom: A History of the Soviet Jewry Movement*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2005, pp. 174.

²³ "President Ronald Reagan and the Jews." *Connecticut Jewish Ledger*, 16 Feb. 2011, www.jewishledger.com/2011/02/president-ronald-reagan-and-the-jews/.

²⁴ "Ronald Reagan Administration: Press Conference With Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of Israel (March 16, 1988)." *Jewish Virtual Library*, American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/president-reagan-press-conference-with-prime-minister-yitzhak-shamir-of-israel-march-1988.