

Hearing on China's Proliferation Practices and Role in the North Korea Crisis

Opening Statement of
Fred D. Thompson
Commissioner

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I am very pleased to be participating in this hearing and that the Commission is addressing the continuing and critical questions of China's proliferation practices and how they may relate to the gathering nuclear crisis in North Korea.

As many of you know, the proliferation issue, especially with regard to China, is one that I worked very diligently on during my tenure in the Senate, particularly when I introduced the China Non-Proliferation Act. As a matter of fact, I spoke before the Commission in 2003 on this very issue.

I have always believed that we need to stop the flow of WMD-related technology at its source, and in many cases that source is China. Earlier this year, the Bush Administration sanctioned a number of Chinese firms. Similar sanctions were applied to Chinese companies in 2004, 2003, and so on. But the same companies, NORINCO and China Great Wall Industry Corporation for example, are continually cited and sanctioned for selling WMD-related technology to problematic countries such as Iran. This is horrific for our national security and we need to take measures to ensure that this behavior stops.

I believe that the Chinese need to be brought more firmly into a viable global nonproliferation regime and be convinced to actively partner with the United States on this issue. Without such cooperation, the critical goal of stopping the proliferation of WMD and their delivery systems is in great jeopardy. There are two specific areas of concern. First it appears that China may be bargaining WMD for access to oil and commodities, as is the case with Iran. We need to find ways to convince the Chinese that these are extremely bad bargains for all concerned in the long run. Second, we need to adjust and improve our sanctions laws, now clearly ineffective against the companies in China which are proliferating. We must ensure the Chinese government is made accountable for those actions. That is, we somehow need to make it painful to the Chinese government if it continues to stand aside in the face of these actions.

The North Korea situation is another dire issue and we must ask: is China using all of its leverage? Is it doing all that it can to ensure that there is a denuclearized North Korea? If not, then what can Congress do to change that? These are important questions which must be addressed, and, in my opinion, addressed quickly.

Again, I'm very pleased to be here today. But at the same time I am very concerned about the problem of WMD-related proliferation and the situation on the Korean

peninsula. I look forward to hearing today's panels and addressing these important issues.
Thank you.