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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6050

March 2, 2007

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Robert Gates
Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Madam Secretary and Mr. Secretary:

I am writing with regard to testimony by Administration officials before Congress this week and subsequent media reporting regarding the Administration's estimate of North Korea's highly enriched uranium program.

The issue of whether North Korea has or had a highly enriched uranium program, and the state of that program, in terms of progress made towards developing nuclear weapons using highly enriched uranium, is of critical significance. We have received briefings and testimony from intelligence and other Administration officials since 2002 regarding North Korea's nuclear activities, including a highly enriched uranium program, and this Committee has relied upon this information as it pertains to U.S. policy towards North Korea.

The testimony and media reports that appeared this week indicate that the Intelligence Community may have reassessed the level of confidence it has about whether North Korea has or had a highly enriched uranium program, or to what extent such a program existed or exists. I am writing now to ask you to clarify the following:

Has the assessment of the Intelligence Community regarding North Korea's highly enriched uranium program, including the confidence level in its assessment, changed since the November 2002 National Intelligence Estimate?

If so, when did it change, why did it change, and how did it change?

In the unclassified November 19, 2002 estimate for Congress, the CIA states, "we recently learned that the North is constructing a plant that could produce enough

weapons-grade uranium for two or more nuclear weapons per year when fully operational – which could be as soon as mid-decade.” Has the level of confidence of that assessment changed? Is this still the Intelligence Community’s assessment? If not, why, and when did the Intelligence Community revise this assessment? What is the current Intelligence Community assessment?

What was the basis for the assessment that there was an HEU plant under construction?

Does the Intelligence Community assess that North Korea has a large-scale centrifuge facility?

What are possible alternative uses for items, such as aluminum tubes, that North Korea may have procured for use in an enriched uranium nuclear program? How likely is it that each of these items was for use in an enriched uranium nuclear program or for another purpose?

Are the assessments of North Korea’s highly enriched uranium program contained in the November 2005 National Intelligence Estimate on North Korea’s nuclear and missile activities, and an Intelligence Community memorandum of December 2006, still the assessments of the Intelligence Community?

From 2001 to the present, did the Intelligence Community provide special assessments on North Korea’s highly enriched uranium program to the State Department, Defense Department, White House, NSC, or the Office of the Vice President? If so, when were such special assessments provided? Please provide copies of those assessments.

Has North Korea provided any information on the highly enriched uranium program to the United States since the initial bilateral meeting in October 2002? If so, what information did North Korea provide?

Please provide an unclassified and classified chronology regarding the changes in the Intelligence Community views on North Korean highly enriched uranium capabilities since 2002.

The Committee also looks forward to the latest assessment of North Korea’s nuclear and missile capabilities, as required by Section 1211 of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which the Director of National Intelligence’s office informs us will be delivered soon.

Thank you for your prompt response to this letter.

Sincerely,



Carl Levin
Chairman