

**Message from Ambassador Robert King,
Special Envoy for North Korea Human Rights Issues
North Korea Freedom Week
Seoul, Republic of Korea
April 24-30, 2011**

As President Obama and Secretary Clinton's Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues, I want to recognize North Korea Freedom Week and its continued role in calling international attention to the deplorable human rights situation in North Korea. I regret that I am unable to attend this year's events in Seoul, but I commend your efforts. Since 2004, North Korea Freedom Week has promoted freedom, human rights and dignity of the North Korean people.

The United States Government remains deeply concerned about human rights in North Korea, the plight of North Korean asylum seekers and refugees, and the well-being of the North Korean people.

This concern reflects our national values. The North Korean Human Rights Act, passed by Congress in 2004 and reauthorized in 2008, demonstrates the commitment of the American people to promote respect for the human rights and the well-being of the North Korean people.

Respect for human rights by the North Korean government will have a significant impact on the prospect for closer ties with the United States and will be necessary for the DPRK to participate fully in the international community.

At the recent release of the 2010 Human Rights Report, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton stated: "History has shown that governments that respect their people's rights do tend, over time, to be more stable, more peaceful and ultimately more prosperous....Societies flourish when they address human rights problems instead of suppressing them. Freedom from fear makes economies grow as citizens invest, innovate, and participate." The people in North Korea deserve no less. Improving human rights for the North Korean people requires that we all work together. Through cooperation we can make progress.