

**Message from Ambassador Robert King,
Special Envoy for North Korea Human Rights Issues
North Korea Freedom Week
April 25-May 1, 2010**

I want to thank the organizers of North Korea Freedom Week for continuing to call international attention to human rights in North Korea. I regret that I am unable to attend this year's events in Seoul, but I welcome your decision to hold the first North Korea Freedom Week in South Korea.

The North Korean Human Rights Act enshrines the commitment of the American people to promote respect for the human rights and the well-being of the North Korean people. As President Obama and Secretary Clinton's Special Envoy for this effort, I recognize the great value of the work done in collaboration with civil society organizations in the United States and South Korea which are dedicated to improving human rights in North Korea. Through our collective efforts, we are increasing the flow of information into and out of North Korea and promoting human rights and laying the groundwork for civil society development.

The United States Government remains deeply concerned about human rights in North Korea and the plight of North Korean refugees. This concern is a reflection of our national values. As President Obama said, "Support for human rights and human dignity is ingrained in America."

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 that country to participate fully in the international community.

Improving human rights for the North Korean people requires that we all work together. Through cooperation with nongovernmental organizations who share our firm commitment to the welfare of the North Korean people, we can make progress. Thank you for your efforts.