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Opening Statement of the Honorable **Ed Royce (R-CA), Chairman**
House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing:
“An Insider’s Look at the North Korean Regime”
November 1, 2017

(As prepared for delivery)

“Thae Yong-ho is one of the highest-ranking North Korean officials ever to defect. As this former deputy ambassador to the United Kingdom will tell us, he wanted his family to be free. It is rare that we have the opportunity to hear from someone with such unique insight into the most repressive regime in the world – and one that is now threatening us with nuclear war.

Mr. Thae, thank you for speaking before the committee. It takes courage. I met with you in August in Seoul, along with Mr. Yoho, Mr. Schneider and Mr. Bera. Your observations and recommendations to the committee today will not only help inform U.S. policy, but it is my hope that your message – including how we can *peacefully* denuclearize the Korean Peninsula – will reach the ears of every North Korean still suffering under Kim Jong Un’s brutal rule.

As I know you agree, it’s critical that we get information to North Koreans so that they can better understand the corruption of the self-serving Kim regime. As we will hear, elites live in relative luxury while millions barely survive. Our efforts are already putting pressure on the regime by creating some unrest and increasing defections. The Kim regime is vulnerable.

To support our information efforts, the House recently passed legislation authored by Chairman Emeritus Ros-Lehtinen to reauthorize the North Korean Human Rights Act. This important bill continues our broadcasts and updates our efforts to include more modern technology to help spread outside information. While we should take a diplomatic approach to North Korea, the reality is that this regime will never be at peace with its people, neighbors or us.

But information is not our only tool. Congress also has done its part to ramp-up economic pressure. We passed a North Korea Sanctions bill last February. In July, we increased the tools at the administration’s disposal by passing a big sanctions package, which targets, among other things, North Korean slave labor exports.

In August, the administration secured a major victory with the unanimous adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2371, which Ambassador Haley called “the strongest sanctions ever imposed in response to a ballistic missile test.” And in September, under her leadership, the Security Council passed another resolution – further upping the pressure on the regime in response to its sixth nuclear test.

To be effective, these tools must be implemented – aggressively. We’ll hear today how sanctions are having an impact and hurting the Kim regime. The administration has increased

the *pace*, but we need to dramatically increase the *number* of North Korea related designations, without delay.

By using all the tools at our disposal, we can bring the necessary pressure to bear to *peacefully* denuclearize the Korean peninsula. Mr. Thae, your insights into the impact of these efforts – and life in North Korea – will be invaluable and I thank you for joining us here today.”