

Statement of Ranking Member J. Luis Correa
Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency Hearing

*“Empty Threat or Serious Danger: Assessing North Korea’s Risk to the
Homeland”*

Thursday, October 12, 2017

I would like to take a moment to send my thoughts and prayers to those in California, including my home district, affected by devastating wildfires. Thank you to the first responders and local emergency personnel for acting so quickly to evacuate impacted areas to save lives and protect property.

I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge those affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. I am frustrated by the slow response by FEMA and the Trump Administration, particularly for Puerto Rico. Instead of blaming victims, President Trump should be ensuring his Administration gets aid to those without water, food, and electricity and working with stakeholders to help devastated communities recover.

Further, while I recognize the serious national security threat posed by North Korea, I would note that there are pressing matters squarely within this Committee's jurisdiction and oversight responsibilities. I hope we can give them the attention they are due.

In regards to North Korea, America’s current diplomatic policy is a dangerous game — to engage in a public threat war with the world’s most unpredictable bully. According to experts, President Trump’s unabashedly undiplomatic rhetoric – threatening to destroy North Korea – has created an impression that it is actually the United States, instead of North Korea, that is motivated by aggression.

Clearly, North Korea is stepping up the pace of its missile testing, devoting more resources to further develop its cyber operations, and threatening the creation of a multi-functional nuclear bomb with destructive power.

Recent actions – such as a North Korea connected hacking group successfully stealing \$81 million from banks in Bangladesh and Southeast Asia – show that North Korea is getting more daring with its cyber operations.

I look forward to hearing from the witnesses today how the Department of Homeland Security can better protect vulnerable critical infrastructure in response to cyber threats and provide assistance in mitigation efforts. Further, while the probability of an EMP attack is unlikely, North Korea has made it clear it is testing its ability to make a hydrogen bomb capable of such destruction.

Speaking on his frustrations with Trump, North Korea’s leader, Kim Jong-Un, stated that Trump “denied the existence of and insulted me and my country in front of the eyes of the world.” President Trump’s own words aid North Korea’s propaganda and create pressure for North Korea to respond with its own provocation.

I also look forward to today’s witnesses addressing how this Administration has escalated the situation with North Korea and exacerbated an already-serious foreign policy matter.