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## CARDIN WELCOMES RELEASE OF DETAINED AMERICAN JOURNALISTS IN NORTH KOREA

*Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD), a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, released the following statement in response to reports of the pardon and release of Laura Ling and Euna Lee:*

“I welcome the reported release of the two American journalists detained in North Korea. I commend President Clinton’s efforts to secure their release. The North Korean regime has finally done the right thing by granting the reporters’ freedom.

“These journalists should not have been detained in the first place. Their detention was yet another violation by a North Korean regime that remains one of the most oppressive in the world. North Korea’s nuclear weapons program and missile development is a continuing concern, as are the regime’s egregious human rights violations and confrontational attitude with the international community.

“U.S. officials are prepared to negotiate with the North Korean government in good faith, but the North Korean government must be prepared to do the same. Time will tell if today is a step in that direction.”

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