

# **REPORT ON U.S. ASSISTANCE PROVIDED INSIDE NORTH KOREA**

**April 15, 2005**

## **I. Introduction and Background**

Section 202 of the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-333) expresses a sense of Congress that U.S. assistance provided inside North Korea should be provided in a specified manner and be conditioned on improvements in certain areas, and requires the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to submit a report describing compliance with the sense of Congress.

## **II. Humanitarian Assistance through Nongovernmental and International Organizations**

### **Minimizing the Possibility of Diversion**

Over the last year, U.S. officials have continued active efforts to minimize the possibility of diversion of aid provided in North Korea. First, U.S. policy is to provide assistance through humanitarian organizations that target the most vulnerable groups of North Koreans and have the best possible monitoring programs and access inside North Korea. Although no agency operating in North Korea has monitoring and access consistent with international standards, there is a wide variation among agencies in this regard. In 2004, the U.S. provided food aid through the United Nations (UN) World Food Programme (WFP) which, with its large in-country expatriate staff and five sub-offices outside Pyongyang, provides more coverage in terms of monitoring than any other agency currently capable of handling large food aid shipments.

In response to the April 22, 2004, explosion at the Ryongchon, North Korea, train station, the U.S. provided assistance in support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which, due to its close relationship with the North Korean Red Cross leading the response, had significant access to the disaster area.

In response to the avian influenza outbreak in North Korea, on April 1, 2005, at the request of the UN World Health Organization (WHO), the U.S. provided three test kits for use in North Korea to WHO, which has an expatriate presence in Pyongyang, North Korea.

Second, due to the higher levels of malnutrition in the North and East of North Korea, the U.S. requires that at least 75 percent of food aid provided to WFP for North Korea be shipped to the northeast ports of Chongjin or Hungnam. This approach does not gain WFP access to inaccessible counties, but it does make it more difficult for the North Korean government to divert the aid to areas of lesser needs given the poor condition of North Korea's roads and railroads and the shortage of fuel that would be required to transport the food long distances.

Third, the U.S. has taken a number of diplomatic steps to encourage the North Korean government to improve transparency, monitoring, and access. U.S. officials have engaged North Korean officials directly on these issues, held a number of bilateral meetings with major donors in which U.S. officials asked them to press the North Korean government, emphasized the importance of these issues during a series of multilateral meetings UN officials have held in New York with major providers of food and other assistance to North Korea, and worked closely with UN officials on North Korea aid issues.

#### Conditioning Increased Assistance

U.S. food aid decisions are based on three criteria – demonstrated need, competing needs elsewhere, and the ability of humanitarian groups to assess needs and monitor distribution. Based on these criteria, in July 2004, the U.S. pledged 50,000 metric tons (MT) of food aid toward WFP's 2004 appeal.

During 2004, the U.S. sought to engage North Korea directly to discuss a potential agreement under which North Korea would address monitoring and access concerns in a comprehensive manner in exchange for increased food aid. In a series of exchanges leading up to and during a bilateral meeting, U.S. officials made it clear – verbally and in writing – that significant increases above current levels of U.S. aid would be possible if North Korea met international standards for monitoring and access. Unfortunately, the North Koreans did not respond favorably to the proposal.

### Encouraging Donations through Monitored, Transparent Channels

When donors provide assistance through WFP and other humanitarian organizations that make maximum efforts to monitor distribution, it increases the leverage of those humanitarian organizations as they seek to promote greater transparency, monitoring, and access. In the bilateral meetings U.S. officials have held with countries that provide food to North Korea, we have strongly encouraged those governments to give food and other assistance destined for North Korea through WFP or other aid organizations that make serious efforts to undertake regular monitoring visits.

### **III. United States Assistance to the Government of North Korea**

Since the U.S. first gave humanitarian assistance to North Korea in 1995, the U.S. has generally provided the assistance through international and nongovernmental organizations, and not through the government. The one recent exception was in response to the April 22, 2004, explosion at the Ryongchon, North Korea, train station, when the U.S. delivered two medical kits and hospital supplies to local health officials near Ryongchon in order to ensure a timely response to the disaster. The value of the kits and supplies, including expedited delivery, was \$142,000. A U.S. government official was allowed to enter North Korea from Dandong, China, to monitor delivery of the kits.

### **IV. United States Nonhumanitarian Assistance to North Korea**

The U.S. provided no nonhumanitarian assistance to North Korea over the last year.