



ACADEMY MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2010
BERGEN COUNTY ACADEMIES

SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND
HUMANITARIAN COMMITTEE

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TOPIC 2: AID TO THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

"The crisis is not over. If the UN can't provide more medicine and food - and quickly - we will see malnutrition rates rise again, undoing much of the progress that has been made." --- James T. Morris, WFP Executive Director

Overview

The collapse of the socialist bloc in Eastern Europe and the fall of the Soviet Union signaled the resulting breakdown in the farming and economic systems in Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DRPK). Also frequent natural disasters like floods left the DRPK devastated by causing a shortfall of their staple diet of grain output by more than 1 million tons from what the country needs to meet internationally accepted minimum dietary requirements. Major famines that were triggered included the one known as "Arduous March" which resulted in the deaths of between 300,000 and 800,000 North Koreans per year during the three year famine which peaked in 1997. These events led to a famine in DRPK following the decline of its supports which began in the early 1990s. The fall of the socialist powers cut DRPK's grain supply by half and left an estimated 200,000 to two million people dead due to starvation. Combined with the severe energy shortage

that DRPK had to suffer through due to the loss of its oil import partners, in 1995, DRPK was forced to make its first public appeal for aid. A survey conducted in 1998 by UNICEF and Amnesty International found 62 percent of children under the age of seven chronically malnourished and sixteen percent acutely malnourished. But by 2006, a new survey showed that 7% of children were severely malnourished, 37% were chronically malnourished, and 23.4% were underweight. Showing that despite the considerable improvement in conditions in the DRPK, still a large percentage of the population was suffering.

Massive international assistance of both food and fertilizer has greatly improved food security. Most of the humanitarian aid is distributed by the UN World Food Programme (WFP). The U.S. has responded generously to WFP appeals for DRPK, and in most years has made the largest contribution. Beginning in 1997, the U.S. began shipping food aid to North Korea through the United Nations World Food Programme to combat the famine. Non-governmental organizations (NGO)s, like Caritas a Catholic humanitarian group, have also been very active in DRPK. Food aid now meets about one-fourth of the country's food needs. A fall 2002 nutritional survey shows considerable improvement. For example chronic malnutrition has dropped to 21



<http://es.rice.edu/projects/Poli378/Maps/Korea/Korea2.gif>

percent. Through WFP, the UN has been constantly attempting to reach negotiations with DPRK however these talks have failed to come through. Kim Jong-il refused help before the floods of 1995, citing the struggle of anti-Japanese guerrillas subsisting on grass. Pride was of greater priority than need at this point. However, the lack of alternatives for food production forced Kim Jong-il to use flood damage as an excuse for asking for aid from the international community. Observation of the distribution has only been permitted in a limited number of areas, and measures taken prior to distribution by North Koreans make proper observation virtually impossible. And now with DPRK's recent activity involving nuclear weaponry talks of further aid are getting limited. Yet this improvement can be maintained only through continued humanitarian assistance.

SOCHUM's goal in this session will be to determine the method in which aid must be provided to DRPK. The government of the DRPK has proved to be unwilling to negotiate even at times of dire need. This has proved to be especially problematic due to the clash between WFP's policy of 'no access – no food' and DPRK's heavy sanctions on any visitors into its country. Furthermore, the government's recent actions have proven to be underhanded at times, like when DPRK continued their nuclear development program while receiving aid from countries

like the Republic of Korea through promises of stopping their nuclear program from progressing. However, despite all the distrust DRPK's actions has harbored in the many national governments worldwide, the troubling fact that out of the about 23 million people living in DRPK, about 6 million are in aid. In other words, roughly 25 percent of the population is in need of the support that outside nations can provide.

In considering solutions to these problems, this committee must remember recent actions that DRPK has taken in recent years while also considering the fact that food shortages and human rights abuses have prompted tens of thousands of DRPK's citizens to risk their lives trying to escape across the border into China. Furthermore, in order to make the system more successful



<http://aftermathnews.files.wordpress.com/2007/02/kim-jong-il-hitler.jpg>

in providing constant aid to those suffering in DRPK while continuing talks with the nation on halting its continued nuclear weapons efforts, countries should discuss an effective means of distributing how much aid each will provide. Economic conditions, political agendas, and the demographics of each nation must also be taken into account. Bear in mind that in recent years, the United States of America has backed down under President George Bush and even South Korea, who used to

traditionally provide constant aid, stopped its flow with the coming of Myung-bak Lee. These actions may have caused a further decline in the conditions of the people of DRPK. The committee must also take into

account the method in which the aid providing project will be carried out, including how to further talks with DRPK on various topics such as, as aforementioned, putting a stop to its nuclear development program. But be sure to realize that the nuclear arms discussion may only be used in terms of negotiations. Delegates of SOCHUM do not hold the power to decide the use of their countries weapons arsenal to stop DPRK's nuclear program, but only the ability to discuss getting aid to DPRK.

Solutions

Currently, DRPK is continuing to receive aid from various organizations, from non-profit to international. However, as aforementioned, many sources that have provided DRPK with a constant source of aid have backed down and taken stronger positions against DRPK. Under the George Bush administration, the United States of America drastically decreased its aid from 350,000 tons in 2001 to 40,000 in 2004. Also, when President Lee Myung-bak took office in early 2008, South Korea put a halt to its tradition of providing constant aid to DRPK and decided that aid should be dependent on how well the North abides by an international nuclear deal.

With conditions continuing to decline in DRPK, a fast course of action is necessary to keep DRPK's severe famine percentage from rising any higher. Without a future plan for increased support for DRPK, it is all too possible that the progress that has been made over the years may all be wasted as DRPK's people plummet back into starvation and suffering.

Key Positions

The World Food Programme Strategic Plan of 2008-2011 has been released by the United Nations and provides a detailed outline of its goals and how they will be achieved. However, each country has had different problems and coalitions with DRPK, which may affect the acceptance in the need for participations. Be sure to take note of recent events between the country and DRPK when taking a stance.

US – Has been the largest supplier of goods to DRPK through negotiations. However, due to disputes on nuclear talks, the US has used the withdrawal of its aid as a threat to force DRPK into a decision. This was especially true under President George Bush and may continue through the term of President Barack Obama.

Republic of Korea

As DRPK's sister country, it has always been a constant source of aid to DRPK. DRPK and RoK was able to better their relationship under the leadership of President Kim Dae-jung, who won a Nobel Peace prize for his efforts and the organization of the first ever summit with DRPK. However, in recent years, the support has dwindled and thus relationships have soured.

Asia

Due to the proximity of DRPK to these countries, many, especially China, have influenced and aided DRPK. With DRPK about to become a possible nuclear threat, support for the country has dwindled from this area.

Europe

DPRK citizens are currently working in countries like Czech Republic. However, despite RoK's push for European banks to provide further aid to DPRK, no plan has

been developed or come to fruition. This area will probably be split into countries like UK who shares US's views on the dangers DPRK poses and others like Russia who have supported the government of DPRK in the past.

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