

North Korea since the war arrived on Wednesday, Aug. 21—and the rice and cornmeal it carried already was being distributed when I visited two rural provinces on Thursday, Aug. 22.

Other North Korean efforts are more troubling, however. According to Monday's report, some 30 to 90 percent of the nation's livestock have been turned over to individuals for tending or slaughtering; and local provinces have gotten a green-light to barter their timber and other resources for food (primarily with China)—increasing deforestation and reducing the fuel available this winter.

THE JULY 1996 FLOOD

So far, North Korea's suffering is largely caused by the 1995 disaster—a massive, 100-year flood that bore striking similarities to our own Midwest flood of just three years ago. People already bombarded with admonitions to "work harder, eat less" have high hopes that the 1996 harvest will be good.

It won't be.

United Nations experts who travelled to the region I saw just after I left reported this week that much of the country's breadbasket region—which produces 60 percent of its grain, and which I visited last month—was under water for five days in July. Rainfall was 3–5 times normal, overwhelming irrigation canals and bursting dams. To put the torrential rains into some perspective, it was twice what North Carolina and Virginia endured in Hurricane Fran's aftermath—and it lasted five times longer. And the rains came at a crucial time in crop development—stunting the growth of corn, and robbing rice stalks of their nutritional kernels.

Along just one 500-mile irrigation network, there were 369 breaks. A report issued by the International Red Cross, UNICEF, and several U.N. agencies puts the likely crop losses in the half-million acres irrigated by this system at \$300 million. And broken sea dykes added to this misery, washing salt water over land and poisoning it for this year and probably several more.

INTERNATIONAL AID

The international community is lending a hand—but only barely. China, Japan and the U.S. each have donated some \$6 million to the current appeal. South Korea has given \$3 million, and promises far more if North Korea agrees to peace talks that President Clinton and President Kim proposed in April.

With the notable exception of Sweden, though, the response of most European nations has been nothing less than a "let 'em starve" pittance that shames the reputation of European people. I spoke with the director of U.S. AID, Brian Atwood, about this—and he plans to raise the matter with his European Community counterpart in October.

In all, just over half of the United Nations' current emergency appeal has been filled. It last until March 1997, but the food-for-work projects to rebuild irrigation systems and other infrastructure must begin immediately after the harvest in order to stave off another disaster in 1997.

NGOs are doing their best to respond, but they are hampered by restrictions on South Korean individuals—many who have family ties to the North—and by North Korea's petulant insistence that NGOs bring food, and not just people. Without eyewitness accounts, without reporting by independent journalists, NGOs simply cannot raise the money they need to fund their operations. U.S. organizations like World Vision and Mercy Corps are doing their best to help, and the U.S. government should lend its weight to their efforts.

In every disaster, NGOs are the first to respond—the people who work with the most vulnerable groups, and who stick around

long enough to do the long-term work needed. Governments—including the U.S. Government—need to do more. But it will be the work of private citizens, and the organizations they support, that will make or break North Korea's recovery. This is my strong conviction, and I raised it with both North and South Korean leaders.

CONCLUSION

Despite the seemingly endless stream of bad news about North Korea, I remain hopeful. My talks with North Korea's leaders were productive, and I am convinced that good-faith efforts by the U.S. and other nations will produce more good-faith efforts by North Korea. It is not a quick process, but it is one whose pace is increasing, and it is our best hope for lending momentum to the progressive factions inside North Korea.

I am hopeful for one other reason: a UNICEF project that represents an historic joint effort by North and South Korea. Like all UNICEF projects, the Oral Rehydration Salts plant will be a Godsend to children. The packets of glucose and salt that this plant will manufacture are used around the world as a circuit-breaker in the spiral of disease and death. If you care about suffering children, and had just three wishes, Oral Rehydration Salts would be one of those wishes.

North Korea was self-sufficient in producing this life-saving product—until the flood swept away its building and equipment in 1995. It has since donated a building for the plant to UNICEF and brought it up to World Health Organization standards—but UNICEF still lacked the money needed to equip the plant.

Until this week.

When I met South Korea's Foreign Minister, Gong Ro Myung en route home, I raised this urgent need with him. At the time, my hopes that South Korea would help were pretty low. But despite the loss of seats in Parliament that ensued after South Korea's donation of humanitarian aid ended in insults by North Korea; and despite public outrage recently reinvigorated by violent clashes between students and police, Minister Gong carried my request to President Kim Young Sam. And despite President Kim's difficult position as the country's first democratically elected leader—he pledged the money needed to finish this project.

His is an example that should inspire political leaders here, and in other capitals. I hope it will mark a determination by charities and private individuals to overcome the challenges of helping people in North Korea as well.

MISSING SERVICEMEN

Finally, I cannot close without expressing my serious concern about the persistent trickle of rumors that missing American servicemen have been sighted in North Korea. I personally raised questions about a pilot shot down during the Korean War, and conveyed the resolve of Americans to help the families of missing servicemen learn the answers to their question.

I know that this Committee's Chairman, along with Senators John Kerry, Nancy Kassebaum, Hank Brown, and Chuck Robb have devoted considerable attention to these questions, as has Senator John McCain. Several of my House colleagues also have worked hard on these issues—especially Congressmen Bill Richardson, Pete Peterson and Lane Evans. I am convinced that this persistent attention, and the ability of Americans in military service today to work on the ground in North Korea, offer the best hope possible.

Four decades of isolation have not produced answers about servicemen missing since the Korean War. I believe it is time to

try a new strategy; and I hope that North Korea's new openness is the silver lining in the black cloud of the terrible suffering the North Korean people are enduring.

Again, thank you for holding this hearing, and for inviting me to testify.●

TRIBUTE TO AL SMITH

● Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize an icon of Kentucky journalism. For over 20 years, Al Smith has been part of what he calls "front-porch, cracker-barrel kind of discussion" on Kentucky radio. But part of that career, and part of a Kentucky tradition, has ended with his announcement of retirement.

Albert P. Smith, Jr., was born in Sarasota, FL, but has lived in Kentucky since 1958. When Al was 15, he entered the American Legion's high school oratorical contest. Living with his parents and grandparents in Hendersonville, TN, he received coaching for the contest from his grandmother and won the top national prize, a \$4,000 college scholarship. He then traveled to New England, the Midwest and the South giving the speech in cities throughout the region. It was on this trip that Al sharpened his speaking skills.

In the mid 1960's, Al bought a 10 percent interest in the Russellville News-Democrat and Leader. That interest eventually grew to his ownership of six weekly newspapers. In 1974, while Al was editor of the News-Democrat, he became a household name as host of the radio program, "Comment on Kentucky." Once a week, he would drive 180 miles to host the show. The man who hired Al to do that job, O. Leonard Press, told the Lexington Herald-Leader, "I can't imagine the Kentucky landscape without Al."

Al is still host and producer of "Comment on Kentucky," Kentucky Educational Television's longest-running show. But last month, Al retired from his job as host of "PrimeLine with Al Smith" which is broadcast statewide via radio. He never planned to retire from the show; but recent health problems have necessitated a change in his busy lifestyle. His regular listeners will miss him greatly.

But perhaps Al's biggest fan is his wife of 29 years, Martha Helen. In an interview with the Lexington Herald-Leader, Martha Helen said of Al, "I still believe Al is the most interesting person I ever met."

Mr. President, I would like to pay tribute to Al Smith for his dedication to Kentucky journalism and I wish him great happiness in his retirement.●

RECENT EVENTS IN INDONESIA

● Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, like many Senators I have been concerned about human rights in Indonesia and East Timor for many years. I was therefore pleased when the Clinton administration indicated on July 25 that it had added armored personnel carriers to the list of military equipment