

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. J.C. WATTS, JR.**

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 3, 1999*

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained on personal family business on the evening of November 1, 1999, when the vote on the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Land Conveyance Act, H.R. 2737, was cast. Had I been present, I would have voted in favor of this measure.

In addition, I was unavoidably detained on personal family business on the evening of November 1, 1999, when the vote on the FEMA and Civil Defense Monument Act, H.R. 348, was cast. Had I been present, I would have voted in favor of this measure.

In addition, I was unavoidably detained on personal family business on the evening of November 1, 1999, when the vote on the Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act, H.R. 1714, was cast. Had I been present, I would have voted in favor of this measure.

## U.S. POLICY TOWARD NORTH KOREA

**HON. TONY P. HALL**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 3, 1999*

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express concern over some of the findings of the Republican task force formed to examine U.S. policy toward North Korea.

Most troubling to me is its assertion that there have been significant diversions of food aid we have donated in response to that country's famine. All evidence suggests that this is just not true. Moreover, it is clear—to me, to our military stationed in South Korea, to policymakers in Washington, Seoul and Tokyo, and to attentive observers—that U.S. food aid to North Koreans is thawing 50 years of icy hostility toward Americans. Our wheat and corn, and our aid workers, are putting the lie to decades of Pyongyang's propaganda about American intentions. We are proving by our presence to all who see us and our sacks of food that Americans are compassionate people who will not stand by while innocent Koreans starve and suffer.

As you know, I have visited North Korea five times—not out of any particular interest in the country, but because their people are suffering. It is a famine that, I believe, history will mark as one of this decade's worst.

In my trips, I always have brought my own translator as well as a member of our armed forces. Other members of my delegations have included a Marine who served in the Korean War—Congressional medal of honor winner General Ray Davis; a doctor from the Centers for Disease Control; reporters from USA Today and the Washington Post; an agriculture expert; and a Korean-American economist who specializes in humanitarian aid.

During every trip, I have met with Western aid workers working in North Korea. In all, I have spoken with scores of them over the past three years. These are people with expertise on hunger and the diseases that prey

on hungry people—and with experience working in challenging situations. None of them has any cause to lie to me, and every reason to raise concerns that I can use to press North Korea officials on. And yet, in five visits I have not found a single aid worker who said food aid is being diverted from hungry people.

The General Accounting Office report turns up no such diversion either; nor does any other U.S. Government agency. Even counting an incident in early 1998, where food sent to a county that later was closed to monitors, the record in North Korea is well within the two percent average loss rate that the United Nations World Food Programme maintains in its operations worldwide. Compared to other difficult situations—such as in Haiti, where more than 10 percent of food was lost in the last reporting period, or Honduras, where the rate was 6 percent—the 1.7 percent loss rate in North Korea is not bad. That incident should not be dismissed, because it was serious enough to provoke WFP to increase restrictions on its aid. But it should be kept in perspective.

It is not only my own experience, and the experiences of knowledgeable aid workers, that refute the allegation that there have been serious diversions of food. Common sense dictates that such a conclusion is off-base, because North Korea has its own harvest and the considerable gifts it receives from China to draw upon to feed its soldiers and government officials. There simply is no reason for North Korea to raid international aid shipments—and every incentive to see that this food reaches those in need.

Mr. Speaker, I don't doubt the conviction of Members of this task force. Since the United States first began to engage North Korea five years ago, there have been doubts by some in Congress about the wisdom of this initiative. But there is equal conviction by others in Congress and the Administration that engaging North Korea, an approach begun under President Reagan, is the wisest course available to us.

There is also broad support for it among U.S. military leaders, and our South Korean and Japanese allies. And there is support among Korean Americans; I am submitting for inclusion in the RECORD the statement of a group of notable Korean American citizens and organizations whose views have helped to inform our policy and should be respected as we continue to refine it.

The task force's findings on North Korea's involvement in narcotics trafficking, missile proliferation, possible nuclear development in violation of the Agreed Framework, and other activities are serious and deserve our attention. It is tempting to instead focus our attention on concerns about food aid, because that is easier to do something about. But cutting off food aid—whether we do it outright, or by tightening the monitoring requirements so much that the effect is to cut off food aid—would not solve these other problems. All it would do is prevent us from saving millions of lives, and prove to North Korea's people that its government was right about America all along.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe the task force's quarrel over U.S. policy toward North Korea does not center on our efforts to feed its suffering people. At a hearing last week, Chairman GILMAN said, "no one—I repeat no one—wants to cut off food aid to North

Korea." I share his concerns that our food aid be monitored to ensure it reaches those in need, and his read of public support for a humanitarian policy that refuses to use food as a weapon—even against North Koreans.

Mr. Speaker, I can't tell you and others who would like to see it that, after this crisis passes, North Korea's people will overthrow their government. History shows that people who survive a famine sometimes do that, and sometimes do not. But I can guarantee you that Koreans—in North Korea, in South Korea, and in our own country—will remember how we respond in this time of crisis. They will remember who helped those who were suffering; and they will never forget those who found excuses to do too little to save the many who died.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of our colleagues to focus on the serious concerns about North Korea that this task force has highlighted; but to remember as we debate our policy toward North Korea, that—in the words of President Reagan—"a hungry child knows no politics."

Our food aid is making the difference between life and death for hundreds of thousands of children and other vulnerable people in North Korea. The private organization's aid workers, and the staff and leaders of the World Food Programme and other U.N. agencies, are doing everything they can to ensure that our food gets to those in need. We should support their work, and seize the historic opportunity that our humanitarian aid has put within our reach: to end the Cold War in this last, desperate outpost, and to secure a lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula.

## KOREAN AMERICANS WEIGH IN ON U.S. POLICY TOWARD NORTH KOREA

WASHINGTON.—Korean Americans are important stakeholders in U.S. policy toward North Korea because many in our community still have families, relatives, friends and other interests in the Korean peninsula.

We believe that our voices must be considered in the formulating policy toward North Korea, and set forth positions that we believe must be an integral part of the U.S. policy.

## U.S. POLICY MUST FURTHER THE PROSPECT OF LASTING PEACE WHILE AVOIDING THE POSSIBILITY OF ARMED CONFLICT

Korean Americans recognize and appreciate the long history of leadership demonstrated by the United States in tackling difficult foreign policy issues with firm commitment to peace. We first and foremost believe that any U.S. policy on North Korea must be formulated so as to encourage peace and reduce the chance of armed conflicts on the Korean peninsula. Koreans have already experienced decades of devastating losses as a result of military actions on the peninsula. We therefore cannot stand any stronger in opposition to the consideration of military action, no matter how limited in scope, as one of the viable U.S. policy options.

## U.S. POLICY SHOULD SUPPORT MONITORED HUMANITARIAN AID TO NORTH KOREA FOR DISTRIBUTION TO THE FAMINE VICTIMS

As we all know, monitoring the distribution of food and medical aid in North Korea is less than satisfactory, due to the unwillingness of North Korean authority to let monitors travel freely. The lack of freedom of travel there, however, is not limited to the monitors but to all people in the country. While it is practically impossible to prove that food aid are not diverted, most documents by U.N. organization and PVOs which provide humanitarian aid report that