

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ACCOUNTING REFORM

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I wish to address the body on an issue of some significant importance to the country. First, good business was done by the Senate today dealing with the accounting situation, the financial trust crisis that we have going on in our country with some of the heads of corporations. I think we have taken a positive step on dealing with that problem.

NORTH KOREA

Mr. BROWNBACK. I want to address the body quickly and briefly but importantly on what is happening in North Korea and to North Korean refugees coming out of that country.

Prior to the July 4th recess, my colleagues, Senator KENNEDY and Senator ALLEN, and I brought to light the plight of North Korean refugees in a hearing before the Immigration Subcommittee. The hearing capped a month of activity that involved the passage of resolution on North Korean refugees in both the House and the Senate. Both resolutions strongly urged the Chinese government not to repatriate North Korean refugees back to North Korea. The House version passed by 406 to 0 and our resolution passed by unanimous consent on June 19, 2002.

At our hearing, we heard some very moving testimony from Ms. Lee Soon-Ok, a North Korean defector who suffered more than five years in a prison camp. We also heard from Ms. Helie Lee, a Korean American writer whose memoir, *In the Absence of the Sun*, movingly highlighted a largely hidden and painful secret shared by hundreds of thousands of Korean Americans and millions of Koreans—more than 50 years of separation among family members and loved ones since the outbreak of the Korean War. Few other country and its people has suffered as much.

In addition, Mr. President, I urged Secretary Powell in both a formal consultation and by correspondence on the need of our Department of State to allow the processing of North Korean refugees together with the Chinese government and the Beijing office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees.

The plight of North Korean refugees, of course, is merely a symptom of a far more pressing issue—how to deal with one of the most repressive and totalitarian states in the world, the isolated country of North Korea ruled by one man, Kim Jong-il.

Although news regarding the efforts of many in the NGO community and countless others working in North East China have been slowly filtering into the West, the true nature of the North Korean regime is largely hidden and inaccessible.

It was not until the showing of a dramatic video of five members of the Han-mee family being forcibly removed from the Japanese consulate in Beijing that the world began to pay attention. Since then, several other asylum bids have drawn the attention of mainstream media, including the horrifying story of baby-killings in North Korean prison camps reported in the New York Times and based on the testimony of Ms. Soon Ok Lee, who, as I indicated before, testified at our hearing.

In June 2002, ABC Nighttime broadcast a three-part documentary of the North Korean refugee in China by Ms. Kim Jung-eun whose schedule did not permit her to testify before our committee. I was told by ABC News staff that thousands of Americans have responded to the broadcast with e-mails in disbelief and in rage against the North Korean regime. I understand that the three programs drew high response from viewers.

It is estimated that between 2 to 3 million people died of starvation and persecution in North Korea from 1995 through 1998 and that up to up to 300,000 North Korean refugees in China are living a precarious and dangerous life, hiding by day, begging by night, in an effort to avoid being captured and repatriated back to North Korea by Chinese and North Korean agents brazenly operating inside China.

Of the 300,000 refugees, only 518 refugees successfully defected to South Korea this year through June 2002, many of them by taking refuge at foreign missions in Beijing and in Shenyang, China.

These actions by the Chinese are simply unacceptable, not only to basic principles and tenets of international human rights, but also by the fact that China is a signatory of the International Refugees Convention. Hundreds of South Korean, Japanese and western NGO's are working inside China to help the refugees, risking their lives and capture by the Chinese police. A German doctor who also testified before our committee worked in North Korea for a year and a half but was evicted by the North Korean regime for disclosing the tragedies of the NK people. People like him and others on the ground in China and Korea have been some of the most vocal and active in their effort to make the whole world aware of the conditions in North Korea and China. Many NGO's have taken care of refugee families full-time with their own money.

I've met with many of these people, all of whom are now effectively shut down from operating in China. And what they tell me over and over is that they simply cannot not ignore what they saw. All of them said to me that they could not look away and ignore the refugees, many of whom were too scared to even beg for help.

These NGO's from South Korea, Japan, the U.S., France, and Germany, first reported the tragedy of the North Koreans to the outside world. These

NGOs who are in the best position to know report that food aid from South Korea, the U.S., and Japan, simply are not reaching the dying people. As I mentioned in a previous statement, I believe it is absolutely necessary to condition stringent monitoring of the delivery of food aid by NGOs in an effort to determine that they are being distributed appropriately. Much of this aid is apparently being diverted to feed the million-plus North Korean army and to reward the elites and the inner circle around Kim Jong-il in Pyongyang. For this reason, many well-respected NGOs, including Doctors Without Borders have withdrawn from North Korea.

More troubling is that these NGO's have confirmed reports of more than a dozen prison camps in North Korea, where the prisoners are starved, forced to work at hard labor, and tortured to death.

Aside from the troubling refugee issue, we cannot forget that North Korea is a threat to regional and global security. North Korea continues its procurement of materials and components for its ballistic missile programs from foreign sources, especially through North Korean firms based in China. In addition, North Korea has become a "secondary supplier" of missile technology and expertise to several countries in the Middle East, South Asia and North Africa. The CIA's 2001 report assesses that North Korea is capable of producing and delivering via missile warheads or other munitions a variety of chemical agents and possibly some biological.

Furthermore, North Korea refuses to carry out its obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, NPT and the 1994 Agreed Framework. Initial IAEA, International Atomic Energy Agency, inspections and intelligence reports in the early 1990s triggered concerns regarding a clandestine nuclear weapons program. U.S. and foreign intelligence have concluded that the DPRK government of North Korea probably has sufficient plutonium for 1 to 5 nuclear weapons. Despite its obligations under the NPT and the Agreed Framework, North Korea continues to refuse inspections.

So while it would be reason enough to continue our pressure on North Korea and China for the humanitarian violations alone, there are also the pressing security threats that the current North Korean government poses to U.S. interests which must be dealt with. While refugee and nuclear weapons issues will necessitate very different responses—the thing they share in common is the alarms they raise about ignoring the North Korean problem in all its complexity.

While I am mindful of the diplomatic sensitivities regarding the need to reach out to the North Korean regime, there comes a time when we have to confront the truth and tell the truth. Moreover, reconciliation efforts have yet to yield any results. There was

much hope after the historic meeting between President Kim Dae Jung and Jong-il in June 2000, that such a gesture would bring about some meaningful change.

As the naval skirmish last month and the continuing problems with the North Korean refugees show, the North Korean issue has simply worsened. It's time for the North Korean regime to immediately allow international monitoring of food aid into the country and to work with the international NGO community to alleviate the suffering of its people. That may at least stem the tide of refugees crossing over into China and being prey to human traffickers and other difficulties faced by refugees. But more fundamentally, the North regime itself must begin to change itself and join the rest of the world in giving hope and freedom to its people.

The U.S. can not afford to give into the slow-walking of reforms in North Korea. For our own security, for the stability of the region and for the sake of basic human rights—North Korea must remain a top policy focus for U.S. foreign policy. We must keep clear and constant pressure on NK and neighboring countries to bring new leadership into being. This is a daunting task, but one that we can not afford to shirk.

We have significant refugee flight taking place out of North Korea. We have had hearings in the Senate Immigration Committee on this particular topic. We have a humanitarian crisis, probably the largest in the world, that is taking place. We estimate that there are between 2 to 3 million people who have died of starvation and persecution in North Korea from 1995 to 1998, in a 3-year time period—2 to 3 million people. Nobody knows for sure because outside observers are not allowed.

This Nation is the most repressive, closed regime in the world today. The world community is feeding those who are left in North Korea. The United States and a number of other donating countries are feeding about half of the population in North Korea. Much of the food aid we are giving North Korea is not getting out to where it is needed. It is still held by the leadership in that country.

We estimate that some 300,000 North Korean refugees are living in China today in a precarious and dangerous lifestyle. They are hiding by day and begging by night, trying to keep from being caught and sent back into North Korea, which is what China does. If they catch people from North Korea, they treat them as economic migrants and ship them back into starvation, refugee camps, persecution, and probably death.

Of the 300,000 refugees in China, only 518 refugees have successfully defected, gotten out of China and into South Korea or into another third country—that is this year, through June of 2002. Many of them have done it by taking refugee status at foreign missions in

Beijing and Shenyang, China. They have rushed embassies in those communities, gotten inside, asked for political asylum, it has been granted, and they passed to South Korea, generally through a third country—many times through the Philippines. I say only 518 this year. If you look at the history since the Korean conflict has ended—now 50 years ago—there have been only several thousand who have defected from North Korea into South Korea. Generally, each year, it has been a trickle—maybe in the teens.

The North Korean regime has been able to keep people in a dogmatic system, saying this regime is the best in the world and saying they are being fed by the President and the leadership. Now that trickle is beginning to really move. They believe it may be up to a thousand; there may be a thousand or more defecting this year alone, which is a massive number considering the history.

Mr. President, the issue I want to bring to light is the role of China and the importance of China in allowing these people to live. If China will allow these people to pass through, or if China will allow the U.N. Commission, or the High Commission on Refugees to establish a processing center to determine if these are people who need to be allowed to pass into third countries, thousands if not millions of people will not have to live in North Korea. If China does not, you are going to see thousands, possibly millions more, die of starvation, persecution, and other causes.

China has a choice. They will choose what the status is going to be, whether these people will live or die. They need to be confronted directly and asked to let these people live, to let them pass through. Let them pass through to Mongolia, to South Korea, to other places; but don't send them back. If they don't want to have them stay in China, allow some place for them to go through, such as a refugee center. But, China, make the choice. It is your responsibility and their blood that will be on your call as to what you determine you are going to do in this particular situation.

North Korea is a country that is difficult for us or anybody else in the world to influence. China is the only country in the world that has some influence on North Korea. So it is going to be their choice as to whether these people will live or die.

North Korea needs to change its regime. I don't need to remind Members of the Senate of the other problems we have with North Korea. They are a supplier of weapons. North Korea has become a secondary supplier of missile technology and expertise to several countries in the Middle East, South Asia, and North Africa. The CIA's 2001 report assesses that North Korea is capable of producing and delivering via missile warheads, or other munitions, a variety of chemical agents and possibly some biological agents as well.

Mr. President, I draw this to the attention of my colleagues because we need to allow refugees to pass and come into the United States as well. We will be bringing this issue up again in front of this body. I hope we will put pressure on China, which doesn't have a good human rights record, so that they can act to save people's lives—if they will only allow these people to pass through.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon is recognized.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE FOR SENIORS

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I am very hopeful the Senate will be able to get on the issue of prescription drug coverage very soon. This is an urgent issue for seniors and the people of this country. I want to spend a few minutes tonight talking about why this is so important and what I think the real challenge is to the Senate in the next couple of weeks.

Mr. President, for the last quarter of the 20th century, the standard Government line on prescription drugs for older people was a little bit like the marquee of the big, old-fashioned theaters you would see downtown. The marquee sign was all lit up and it always read: "Coming soon." But, for seniors, that "soon" just never seems to arrive.

Years ago, when I was director of the Oregon Gray Panthers—I had the honor to be co-director for about 7 years before I was elected to the House—I got many of the questions then that all of us in the Senate get now. Seniors asked then, just as they do now at our town meetings, if anybody in Washington is ever going to provide some real help in paying for prescription medicines.

I am very pleased that Senator DASCHLE has made this a priority issue for the Senate. He has made it very clear to me that he is willing to work with anybody in the Senate to finally get this job done and to get it done right.

I think we know what this issue is all about for seniors, and that is the cost of medicine and coverage for medicine. In effect, cost and coverage really go hand in hand because if you are able to get seniors coverage, but you have not held down the cost, then you are not getting a whole lot for the Government's money. Of course, if you take steps to control costs, but many seniors still don't have the ability to meet even those costs, we will continue to have more and more older people fall between the cracks.

So it is important that the Senate addresses both of these issues and addresses them right. I want to talk for a few minutes about what I think some of the key components are first of holding costs down. First, I think it is important that it be done with bargaining power in the private sector. In discussing this—and we will do this over