

International Intelligence

N. Korean food crisis is like Ethiopian famine

David Morton, head of the UN World Food Program in North Korea, said in Beijing on Jan. 30, that the food disaster in North Korea has produced a generation of stunted and dramatically underweight children, and has forced scores of adults to leave their jobs in search of nourishment. Returning from Pyongyang, Morton said that the famine in North Korea is comparable in scale to the Ethiopian famine of the mid-1980s, and massive foreign assistance will be needed for at least three years to turn the situation around.

The UN has appealed for \$376 million in aid in 1999 to alleviate the food shortages and health problems resulting from prolonged malnutrition. While there is enough grain to last through June, North Korea is very short of beans, edible oils, and other items needed to supplement existing supplies of maize and rice, Morton said.

Morton's report echoes the results of a nationwide nutritional survey conducted last year by international aid donors, which found that 62% of children under age seven have stunted growth and that large numbers face developmental problems. Morton stressed the social and economic dislocation caused by people searching for food. In hospitals and schools, 25% of the staff is gone at any time. "When you ask why, the explanation will be given usually that, well, they have asked for time off to go and secure food for their families," he said.

'Sowetan' paper calls for Mugabe's overthrow

In the most lurid attack on Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe yet to come from South Africa, the *Johannesburg Sowetan* on Jan. 28 demanded that "the slow but precipitous slide into military dictatorship in Zimbabwe needs to be checked before it compromises democracy in the region." The editorial claimed that the Zimbabwe military "has taken upon itself to act above the law, detaining journalists and threatening the

military. Democracy cannot be held hostage to the whims of sovereignty." The editorial then held up the South African military intervention into Lesotho in September 1998 as what might be required for Zimbabwe.

The South African press has been going after Mugabe ever since his forces came to the defense of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and also because of his designs for Zimbabwe to have a strong economic and financial presence in Congo.

In mid-January, the Zimbabwean military police arrested, detained, and reportedly tortured Mark Cavunduka, editor of the *Sunday Standard*, which had reported on Jan. 11 on an alleged military coup against Zimbabwe. The *Standard* is owned by Clive Wilson, a former British subject and now a naturalized Zimbabwean. His detention became a *cause célèbre* among the human rights lobby, who nonetheless kept mum when a Ugandan editor was arrested about the same time. Zimbabwean military officers say that the coup report is not true, and said one officer, "There were reports in the South African military about the coup 24 hours before the report hit the streets."

In December, Robert Rotberg, coordinator of the Southern Africa Program at the Harvard Institute for International Development, wrote a commentary for the *Christian Science Monitor* proclaiming, "Gracefully or By Force, Zimbabwe Leader Must Go." Rotberg, a leading Pan-Africanist ethnologist, predicted that Mugabe will be driven out of office by a combination of "urban protests fueled by economic discontent, cascading army mutinies, and the alarm of even the many intimidated members of his cabinet. President Nelson Mandela of South Africa would not be sorry to see his neighbor ousted. Nor would Washington and London."

Historian Medvedev calls for Russian unity

Leading Russian historian and Soviet-era dissident Roy Medvedev called for national unity around Russian Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov, and denounced those who were urging Primakov to seize power because of Yeltsin's current illness, in an arti-

cle in the Jan. 28 *Rossiskaya Gazeta*.

In his accompanying letter of transmittal, Medvedev said, "The accord among the branches of power that emerged almost spontaneously during the most dramatic days of the September crisis started to fall apart as soon as the situation in the country and society improved a little. In the past few days Primakov's attempt to strengthen this accord by the adoption of a number of agreements and laws has come up against vicious polemics and rabid resistance from a number of people and groups who are creating precisely an atmosphere of crisis and chaos—evidently the best conditions for their political activity. In an election year this is a dangerous position."

After reviewing Primakov's career, Medvedev's article concludes: "What the people put first is not a politician's age, but the stability, predictability, and honesty of that politician and his statesmanlike wisdom. . . ."

"The Russian ship of state, when steered by the young radicals, suffered disaster, began to list dangerously, and took on a good deal of water. Yevgeni Primakov corrected the list, helped to pump out a large part of the water, and directed the ship onto a calmer path, but still toward the same goal—the well-being and prosperity of Russia. In this the Primakov government can only be wished success."

Probe of Diana's death completes major phase

Through the Paris prosecutor's office, Judge Hervé Stephan confirmed on Jan. 29 that he has completed another major phase of the probe into the crash that claimed the life of Princess Diana, Dodi Fayed, and driver Henri Paul. On Jan. 29, Stephan met with several of the paparazzi who were on the scene when the crash occurred, including Fabrice Chasserie, to determine whether any of them knew what Diana's schedule would be while in Paris, and what the couple's destination was when they left the Ritz Hotel shortly before midnight on Aug. 30, 1997. According to Stephan, Chasserie had three phone discussions with the owner of

'AL-ARAB INTERNATIONAL,' a London-based Arabic daily, published the call by the "Women's Committee for the New Silk Road," in its Jan. 20 issue, under the headline, "The New Silk Road: A Bridge to Re-Integrate Asia and Europe for the Next Millennium." The call was initiated by Helga Zepp-LaRouche to lift the sanctions imposed on Iraq, in the context of creating a new, just world economic order.

LAOS Prime Minister Sisavat Keobounphan visited Beijing, where he met with Chinese President Jiang Zemin on Jan. 26 and Prime Minister Zhu Rongji the day before. Laos and China are developing "a long-term, stable, and co-operative good-neighborly relationship of mutual trust oriented towards the new century," the leaders have stated.

NEW ZEALAND Prime Minister Jenny Shipley had lunch with Queen Elizabeth at the royal country estate at Sandringham in January, but has refused to reveal what was discussed, saying it "wasn't appropriate." Shipley, whose free-market paradise is U.S. Vice President Al Gore's model government, was met by five members of the royal family.

THE MUSLIM LEAGUE'S semi-official mouthpiece, the *Pakistan Observer*, denounced the British government for granting asylum to Mohajir Qaum Movement chief Altaf Hussein. Although filed in 1992, Hussein's request was only accepted in December 1998, shortly after the Pakistani government imposed emergency rule in Karachi and moved to crush the terrorist MQM. Wrote the *Observer*, "Its timing is certainly significant, and is not free of the traditional British mischief in its dealings with . . . its former colonies."

RWANDA has applied to join the East African Community, which is currently comprised of Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya. Rwandan President Pasteur Bizimungu said on Jan. 21 that Rwanda will now align itself with English-speaking countries.

the Ritz Hotel limousine service during the day of Aug. 30.

Under the procedures of the 17-month-long probe, once Judge Stephan has completed his preliminary finding, all of the civil parties to the case, including Mohammed Al Fayed, Dodi Fayed's father, will have several weeks to ask him to take up unexplored areas of inquiry, which could extend the investigation for several more months. Stephan will then submit a report on his completed investigation to the French prosecutors, who will then determine whether to proffer criminal charges. Judge Stephan has final oversight over the prosecutors' decisions.

A major question continues to center on the white Fiat that collided with the Mercedes in which Dodi Fayed, the Princess, and Paul were riding. The Fiat is still missing, and there is no information on the driver. In mid-January, Mohammed Al Fayed announced a large reward to anyone with information leading to the location of the Fiat or its driver.

Turbulence causes Polish Premier to cancel trip

Poland's Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek called off his planned visit to Morocco, "in light of important events domestically," his spokesman, Jaroslaw Sellin, announced in Warsaw on Jan. 28. The continuing protests and transit blockades by farmers and radicalized supporters, which affect 120 roads, and a nationwide strike of anaesthetists, which was scheduled to end on Jan. 28 with an agreement on wage increases signed by the government, are two aspects that have kept Poland turbulent through the past weeks. An agreement on the situation in the farming sector still is far off.

Moreover, a crisis broke out within the government coalition, when a "watchdog bill" to control privatizations, which was pushed by Buzek's Solidarity Alliance, was vetoed by President Aleksander Kwasniewski, who pointed out that the Freedom Union, Buzek's minor coalition partner, opposes the bill, and argues in defense of "full market freedom" for privatizations. Also on

Jan. 28, Deputy Economics Minister Jerzy Eysymontt admitted that the Polish economy has moved into a "danger zone," which got the appropriate message across, although he hastened to declare that there was no reason to resort to "catastrophic forecasts."

China promotes ties with India

To the extent that formal greetings provide a signal, the messages of congratulations that India received from China on Jan. 26, for India's Republic Day, are notable for their positive tone, and for the desire to work for promotion of "healthy and smooth development" of relations between the two countries. China's President Jiang Zemin sent a message to President K.R. Narayanan, saying: "As the two most populous developing countries in the world with long histories and ancient civilizations, China and India should treat each other with sincerity, strengthen the understanding and cooperation between the two countries, and seek common development. These are the wishes shared by our two peoples and [they] are in conformity with the fundamental interests of our two countries. I am ready to work with you to promote the healthy and smooth development of Sino-Indian relations so as to benefit our two peoples."

Equally positive is the tenor of the message from Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji, to India's Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee: "As the initiators of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, China and India enjoyed long-term friendly exchanges in history. Harmonious coexistence and common development are the shared wishes of our two peoples. The Chinese government has always worked to establish and develop good neighborly, mutually beneficial and cooperative relations with India on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. I am deeply convinced that as long as China and India strictly follow these principles in practice, a cooperative and constructive partnership into the 21st century between the two countries will be realized."