Mr. Speaker, the North Korean regime has the worst

human rights record in the world. Citizens are denied the most fundamental

freedoms in classic Communist fashion,

the economy results in shortages and an ever-present threat of starvation.

Additionally, the regime has divided

citizens into 51 classes. At least 7 million citizens, more than one-third of

the population, are regarded as members of a hostile class, categorized as a

potential threat to the existence of

this regime. Members of this class are

held in one of North Korea’s 12 known prison camps. According to an MSNBC

news report from January 2003, one of

these prison camps is literally three times the size of Washington, DC.

Meanwhile, the State Security Agency maintains at least 12 political prisons

and about 30 forced labor and reeducation camps. There are also rumors of a

series of underground camps. No one knows how many exist and, of course,

how many prisoners are being held.

These Stalinist-style gulags await any citizen, even children, who dare to

commit such crimes as reading a foreign newspaper, singing a foreign pop

song, listening to a foreign radio broadcast, or making statements that could

be interpreted as an insult to the regime. The camps combine starvation,

hard labor and brutal and irrational

punishments. In one camp, former inmates claim prisoners work in such

hard conditions that 20 to 25 percent of

the 50,000 prisoners die every year.

To leave North Korea without official

permission is an act of treason. The Communist regime maintains a series

of detention facilities along the border with the People’s Republic of China for

refugees forcibly returned. Pregnant

women endure forced abortions or have

their infants killed just after birth on

the off chance that they were impregnated by Chinese men. Everyone is

then interrogated to determine the extent of their exposure to the Free

World, literally having the truth beaten out of them.

This determines whether the regime

sends these refugees to a gulag facing

certain death or to a gulag facing likely death. The massive mechanistic

prison camp system, combined with the

outlawing of immigration, has led many to refer to North Korea as

‘‘the world’s largest prison camp.’’ Jasper Becker, former Beijing bureau chief for

the South China Morning Post, has estimated that Kim Jong Il and his father, Kim Il Sung, are responsible for

killing over 7 million Koreans, 3 million civilians in the Korean war, 3 million by deliberate famine, and at least

1 million more political prisoners either executed or worked to death.

Mr. Speaker, even worse is the Free

World’s help that props up this regime.

Since 1995, the United States has provided over $1.1 billion, about 60 percent

of it for food aid. About 40 percent was

energy assistance through the Korean

Peninsula Energy Development Corporation, KEDO, a multilateral organization established in

1994 to provide energy aid in exchange for North Korea’s pledge to halt its nuclear program. The

Bush administration finally shut down

the KEDO program earlier this year, long after North Korea had publicly violated the agreement that secured

KEDO energy payments in the first place.

Food aid to North Korea has also been an international humanitarian

fraud. The Communist regime prevents donor agencies from operating in the

country. The biggest suppliers of aid, China and South Korea, do little or no

monitoring of what happens to the food

that they supply to this country. The

world’s food and humanitarian aid rarely makes it to those suffering in

North Korea. Instead, it has been used to feed Kim Jong Il’s million-man

army, almost 1 million people in his security forces, as a preference for the

Communist Party elite. No such aid

should be allowed against North Korea

demonstrates tangible progress to freedom and transparency. Now some people worry about the risk of confronting

and destabilizing a hostile and heavily

armed power. These people should know that no good policy comes without risk.

President Ronald Reagan did not coddle the Soviet Union, he did not offer

to provide them the nuclear fuel they

need to build nuclear weapons in the silly hope they would not build any.

President Reagan took the struggle for freedom and democracy to the gates of

the Soviet Union country itself.